EVANGELICALISM IN ENGLAND

In The

FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

As Exemplified In

THE LIFE AND WORKS

Of

WILLIAM JAY
(1769-1853)

by

Henry E. Pressly

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Divinity of the
University of Edinburgh in
partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Doctor
of Philosophy degree.

May 15, 1950

D E D I C A T I O N

TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

FOREWORD

It is not my purpose to set forth in this thesis a biography of William Jay. Neither do I propose to give an exhaustive study of Evangelicalism as such, or to dwell on the Evangelical Revival of the previous century except as its influences are seen and felt in the period of this study. I do not plan to deal with any phase of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church. But I do propose to consider the various aspects and general conditions of life in England in the first half of the nineteenth century, and to examine carefully the main sources which fed the stream of English Evangelicalism during that period. Once the historical setting has been arranged, I plan to place William Jay in it and to make a complete and exhaustive study of his life and works, with special reference to his evangelical outlook. I shall then evaluate his contribution to the Evangelicalism of his day.

Mr. Jay states that one of his contemporaries, the Rev. Thomas Haweis, M.D., "... left a large diary, which would have thrown much light on the earlier periods and events of the revival of religion in our own country; but his son, a clergyman, of very opposite views to his father's, prevented the use which I wished to have made of it."[1] That diary has been sold to the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia. Fortunately, through the

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, pp. 479 f.

kindness of this library, it has been microfilmed and flown to Great Britain, and through the countesy of the Rev. A. Skevington Wood, I have had access to it.

William Jay had a considerable following in America, where, as we shall see, his Standard Works were published before they were in Great Britain. I am deeply indebted to Kenneth S. Gapp, Ph.D., Librarian of Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, for detailed information as to the acceptance and various editions of Mr. Jay's writings across the Atlantic.

My sincere appreciation goes to my professorial advisers, the Very Rev. Principal Hugh Watt, D.D., D.Litt., and the Rev. Prof. W. S. Tindal, O.B.E., D.D. I also wish to thank the Rev. J. B. Primrose, M.A., Librarian of New College, and Miss Erna R. Leslie, M.A., B.Com. It would be very ungrateful on my part if I failed to mention the Rev. W. J. Coggan, M.A., and James F. Blackett, M.A., M.D., minister and secretary, respectively, of Argyle Chapel, Bath. They have made all the historical records available to me, and have assisted in other ways. There are many others who in a personal way, or through their staffs, have helped me in this research. I am listing some of them and their libraries below.

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In order to be consistent, I have used American spelling, punctuation, and grammar throughout, except in direct quotations, where I have endeavored to be faithful to the original text.

H. E. P.

Edinburgh, Scotland
May 1, 1950

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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A P P E N D I X E S

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
of
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A General Survey

The closing years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth comprise one of the grimmest and yet most glorious epochs in the annals of English history. It was a period of paradoxes. Rarely have the fortunes of this proud and determined nation been at a lower ebb than at the beginning of the nineteenth century; nor have they often been higher than at the middle of this century. A historian, in looking back over these crucial years, summarized them in ten brief words: "It was an hour of gloom and glory for England."[1]

The American Revolutionary War had been recently fought; and England had lost her colonies in the historic Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was an age of unrest and tension -- a time when hope leaped high in the heart of man the world over. "The American declaration of rights gave the cue to every friend of liberty in the old world."[2] This spirit is even more dis-

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[1]G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), p. 578.

[2]H. A. L. Fisher, A History of Europe (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1936), p. 791.

cernible in 1789 at the time of the French Revolution -- that mighty upheaval of the common man. Men lived fast and dangerously and there was a great upsurge of human thought and feeling. Another historian has captured something of the spirit of the age and preserved it for us.

> The death of Louis XV, the storming of the Bastille, the wild march of the Menads on Versailles, the fête of the federation, the flight to Varennes, the trial and death of Louis XVI, the unforgettable evening sun of July, and, strangest and strongest of all, that grim midnight scene in the Tribune when Philippe Egalite votes for his kinsman's death -- these are among the scenes lingering on the memory of the reader. The drama unrolls itself, scene by scene, act by act, and we witness the horror and the hope of the actors.[1]

The effects of the French Revolution were strongly felt in England; and while Englishmen feared lest a similar uprising should take place on their sacred soil, they awoke to find one already much in evidence. The Industrial Revolution, which exerted such a far-reaching influence upon all phases of English life, had its origin "in our island, and may for convenience be dated from the early years of George III."[2] Even though this revolution did not appear in the same manner as did the French, it was, nevertheless, as real and its effects as permanent.

On top of all this, England found herself threatened by war with Napoleon, which came in 1793. Alarm and anxiety were great. The threat was very real. The French forces were massed along the coast from Ostend to Brest, and ships, gunboats,

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[1]Robert H. Murray, Studies in the English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., 1929), I, p. 327.

[2]Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 507.

and transports were ready for an overwhelming descent upon the English coast.[1] In 1805 Lord Nelson met the French fleet under the command of Admiral Villeneuve off Cape Trafalgar. It was during this memorable battle that Nelson ran up his famous signal, "England expects every man to do his duty",[2] and though the gallant commander fell mortally wounded, he won a decisive victory for the English. Napoleon gave up his dream of crossing the Channel and invading Britain. In 1815 he was completely and finally overthrown by the Duke of Wellington at the battle of Waterloo. England emerged victorious from the Napoleonic wars. She was Mistress of the Seas, and possessor of a vast new Empire.[3] She also came out of this conflict the greatest manufacturing country in the world.

When we look at the morals of the day we find that England had much to be desired. When it came to religion, we notice that she had reached a very low ebb in the eighteenth century.

> Never has a century risen upon Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne and reached its misty noon beneath the second George -- a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future.[4]

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[1]E. A. Payne, The Church Awakes (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1942), p. 13.

[2]J. R. Green, A Short History of the English People (London: MacMillan and Co., 1916), p. 821.

[3]Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 508.

[4]William Connor Sydney, England and the English in the Eighteenth Century (London: Ward and Downey, 1891), II, p. 328, quoting J. H. Overton.

However, we shall see that with the turn of the century there was a gradual improvement in religious matters, though it was often imperceptible. And in spite of the chronic enemies of man -- famine, poverty, disease, ignorance, and war -- we shall notice that the period had its brighter side and that many helpful reforms were instigated. It was a time when Evangelicalism was in the forefront and every Evangelical had just cause to be proud of his affiliations.

"The Workshop of the World"[1]

The very year in which William Jay was born marks the birth of mechanical power in cotton manufacture and engineering.[2] For it was in 1769 that Richard Arkwright patented his water frame and James Watt his steam engine. It is impossible in so brief a compass to express the full meaning and worth of these inventions, or to tell the tremendous changes which they wrought upon society. The Industrial Revolution was well under way. The greatest industrial development during the reign of George III, greater even than that of the cotton trade, was the change involved in the use of coal in iron-smelting. In four decades iron production in Great Britain increased ten-fold.[3] Factories and houses sprang up almost over night. "The inexor-

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[1]Fisher, op. cit., p. 774.

[2]C. R. Fay, Great Britain from Adam Smith to the Present Day (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), p. 303.

[3]Trevelyan, History of England, p. 605.

able 'march of bricks and mortar', burying forever the green farmlands of Middlesex,"[1] was supplying a present need, but at the same time creating many very real problems which would have to be faced in a short while.

With the turn of the century the roads had been greatly improved. Water transportation, both inland and overseas, became very popular; and railroads later came into use. Thus England stood without a rival as the Mistress of Manufacture and won for herself the name, "the workshop of the world."

But if it was an hour of glory for England, it was also an hour of gloom. We have been looking only on externals. Let us now look upon the heart. We have seen the smoke pouring forth from those huge stacks; let us now take a trip through the factory. We have thought of the great blessing of coal; let us take a trip into the mines so that we may see the dreadful price at which the coal was obtained.

Life became very crowded and complex in the great industrial areas. The population of the country as a whole had increased beyond all anticipation.

> In 1769 the number of inhabitants was not more than eight and one half millions. At the first census of 1801, returns for Great Britain revealed a population of 8,892,536. In 1831 it had passed thirteen millions. By 1851 over seventeen millions are reported.[2]

What was true of the country at large was even truer of the

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[1]G. M. Trevelyan, English Social History - A Survey of Six Centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria (London: Longmans,Green and Co., 1944), p. 492.

[2]Robert F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England 1800-1850 (London: The Epworth Press, 1937) pp. 17 f.

industrial cities. Men and women swarmed into them by the tens of thousands. Factory life was all but unbearable. The conditions under which the laboring man worked are almost unbelievable to us of today. The factories were dark, cold, and dreary. The hours were inhumanly long. Man toiled away more like a beast than a creature made in the image of God. And what was even worse was the appalling picture of child labor! The number of children who worked in the factories was very large in proportion to the adults. They worked twelve, fourteen, or even sixteen hours under the worst conditions imaginable.

> Evidence was produced to show that children of two years of age had been compelled to assist their parents, while it was a common practice for children of five, six, seven and eight years of age to work long hours in the mills. All this enforced and cheap labor made the adult worker less valuable and more easily displaced. New-born children were welcomed in some families because they would increase in the near future the earning capacity of the home.[1]

They were compared to the West Indian slaves by those who sought to bring about legislative reforms. "It occurred to two of these pietists, a Bradford manufacturer named John Wood and a land agent named Robert Oastler, that in England and even in Yorkshire there were human beings whose lot was as cruel as that of the West Indian negro, the children compelled to work day and night for fourteen, fifteen, or even sixteen hours at a stretch—the little white slaves of the factories."[2] These hellish conditions were improved somewhat when The Royal Commission of In-

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[1] Ibid., p. 247.

[2] Elie Halevy, History of the English People in 1830-1841, III, trans. E. I. Watkin (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1927), p. 109.

quiry was appointed to visit the factories and make its report. In 1833 the Government passed the Factory Act, which limited to eight the number of hours any child under thirteen years of age might be allowed to work.[1] However, an employer might use two consecutive shifts of children and thus keep his machines going continuously for sixteen hours. But what of the adolescents and the adults? Were they to work the sixteen hours? This Factory Act afforded the workmen of all ages a means by which they could escape this danger. The principle of the eight hour day had been laid down for the first time, and it gradually came to be generally applied. But the great reform came about only by first arousing the careless conscience of a disinterested nation to the terrible practice of child labor. It was through legislation on behalf of the children that the adults received their greatest benefits.[2]

The abuses which followed life in the industrial areas were many. It was nothing more than eking out a bare existence. Parents and children alike labored for the one purpose of keeping alive. They were content to live on the simplest diet,consisting mostly of bread and a bit of cheese. Official reports of the period serve as a useful commentary on the social and economic state of the great masses. The circumstances under which they lived were enough to awaken any indifferent people and stir them into action. A writer in describing the miser-

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[1] Ibid., p. 115.

[2] Ibid., p. 111.

able and unhealthful life of the working people in one of the great cities of England paints this sad picture.

> Manchester had 15,000 persons living in cellars, almost one-eighth of the working population. Among these cellar dwellings there were 1,500 cases in which three persons slept in one bed, 738 cases where four slept in one bed, 281 cases where five slept in one bed, 94 cases where six slept in one bed, 27 cases where seven slept in one bed, 2 cases where eight slept in one bed, and 31 cases where there were no beds.[1]

Sanitation was so utterly lacking that the historian in referring to the wretched living conditions of London goes so far as to say that the outbreak of cholera in 1832 and again in 1848 was actually a great blessing, "because the sensational character of this novel visitation scared society into the tardy beginnings of sanitary self-defense."[2]

These wretched social conditions of the period but added to the stress of the economic pressure. Wages were miserably low, and food prices relatively high. During the Napoleonic wars and immediately following, many people actually died of starvation. Unemployment was much in evidence, and there was little or no effort on a national scale to solve this problem. An excess of laborers put them at the mercy of ruthless employers. The working man was exploited on every hand. Thousands of soldiers who had been fighting for their country on the continent returned to their native land only to find that there was nothing for them to do, or that they were actually not wanted. They wandered about over the country as ordinary tramps, many of

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[1] Wearmouth, op. cit., pp. 247 f.

[2] Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 529.

them dying of starvation.

When we take a trip through the coal mines we find conditions even worse than in the factory. Documentary evidence bears testimony to a life far under the surface of the earth which makes one shudder.[1] Here again the children are very prominent. Many of them were working who were under thirteen years of age. Children often began at four years of age, some of them even earlier. "A child of three was made to follow his father into the workings 'to hold the candle, and when exhausted with fatigue was cradled upon the coals until his return at night.'"[2]

Men and women worked in the coal mines side by side. "In some of the Yorkshire mines men worked 'in a state of perfect nakedness' and were 'in this state assisted in their labour by females of all ages, from girls of six years to women of twenty-one, these females being themselves quite naked down to the waist.'"[3] Accidents were quite common. Life was worth very little. There were frequent cave-ins and once they occurred, it meant all but certain death, as there were no secondary escape routes. For it was well after 1850 that government legislation required all mine operators to provide such a safety measure. Ventilation and drainage were lamentably inadequate. Miners often worked in water to their waists. They had very

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[1]Parliamentary Papers, Vol. XV, pp. 255-9 as cited by Robert F. Wearmouth in Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England, p. 224.

[2]Ibid., p. 224.

[3]Ibid.

poor medical service, and disease was prevalent. Few miners passed the age of forty, for tuberculosis usually carried them away. If not that, it was small pox or some other epidemic which would sweep through the crowded hovels of the mining villages.

Rural life presents a somewhat brighter picture, though it, too, was far from desirable. English agriculture had suffered greatly at the hand of industry; for many of the farm laborers had left their work in the country and crowded into the industrial areas. Those who remained behind found themselves thwarted at every turn in their efforts to get ahead. The wages of the laborer were incredibly small. At the outbreak of the war with Napoleon in 1793, the average daily wage of an agricultural laborer throughout England did not exceed one shilling in winter, and one shilling sixpence in summer. In 1800 there was a twenty to twenty-five per cent increase. After 1807 two shillings became the average wage, and three years later it was three shillings.[1] The landed gentry grew richer, and the laborer grew poorer. The poet very aptly describes this condition for us.

> Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
> Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

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[1]Elie Halevy, England in 1815 -- A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, I, trans. E. I. Watkin and D.A. Barker (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1924), p. 245.

> A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
> When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
> For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
> Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more;
> His best companions, innocence and health;
> And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.[1]

A number of Enclosure Acts were passed prior to the nineteenth century and as late as 1865. It was the purpose of these acts to take over the land which had previously been used by the laborer as a place to graze his cattle or as a small farm for himself and his family and secure it for the landed proprietor. Year by year the poor man was deprived of his fields until the wretched practice was finally stopped well on into the Victorian era. The story may be briefly told. It was a case of personal aggrandizement on the part of the gentry at the expense of the peasant. The laborer had little that he could call his own, and his master saw to it that he remained poor by exacting high rents and making him work like a slave in order to pay his rent. Lord Byron cries out against this evil which was so prevalent in his day. He rebukes the landlords who stayed at home and grew immensely wealthy off the war at the expense of the peasants.

> Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent
> Their brethren out to battle. Why? for rent!
> Year after year they voted cent for cent,
> Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions -- why? for rent!
> They roar'd, they dined, they drank, they swore, they meant
> To die for England, -- why then live? for rent![2]

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[1]Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village," The Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith (Globe ed.; London: MacMillan and Co., 1889), p. 582.

[2]Lord Byron, "The Age of Bronze," The Works of Lord Byron, ed., Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: John Murray, 1901), V, p. 571.

Nor did the poor man have any recourse to the law. Most of the courts were thoroughly corrupt and bribery was not uncommon. The laws were set against the peasant. A very competent historian reminds us that there were two hundred petty crimes which were punishable by death.

> Not only were horse and sheep stealing and coining capital crimes, but stealing in a shop to the value of five shillings, and stealing anything privily from the person, were it only a handkerchief. But such was the illogical chaos of the law, that attempted murder was still very lightly punished, though to slit a man's nose was capital. The effect of increased legal severity in an age that was becoming more humane, was that juries often refused to convict men for minor offences that would lead them to the scaffold. Moreover it was easy for a criminal, by the help of a clever lawyer, to escape on purely technical grounds from the meshes of an antiquated and over-elaborate procedure. Out of six thieves brought to trial, five might in one way or another get off, while the unlucky one was hanged. It would have been more deterrent if they had all six been sure of a term of imprisonment.[1]

If the earlier Hanoverian epoch established rule by law, it remained as one of the scientific tasks of the nineteenth century to give us legal reforms. Everywhere the poor man turned he found himself utterly crushed. Is it surprising, then, that there were hatred, hunger, riots, and general unrest seen on every side? Freedom-loving man was crying out and longing for the day when he could break his shackles and set his fettered spirit free.

The English prisons presented a most pathetic and deplorable sight. They had not the least semblance of sanitation. Medical attention was all but unknown. Disease and plagues

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[1]Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 348.

were constantly breaking out, and prisoners frequently died before they were brought to trial. Women and men were often kept together, and all that the attendants pretended to do was keep the prisoners from escaping. Let us take a look into a typical prison.

> These four rooms comprised about one hundred and ninety superficial yards, into which, at this time, nearly three hundred women with their numerous children were crowded, -- tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons, without classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that given by a man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day. In the same rooms, in rags and dirt, destitute of sufficient clothing, sleeping without bedding on the floor, the boards of which were in part raised to supply a sort of pillow, they lived, cooked and washed.[1]

There was no effective police system until that which was begun by the great reformer, Robert Peel, in 1830.[2] This state of affairs was disgraceful, and many social evils may be traced directly to this fact. One can easily imagine the midnight marauders and the ease with which they lurked at every turn in the road. Since there were no police to be had to stop minor offences, it was impossible to have a safe and decent life in the over-crowded city areas. The only regular means of quelling the riots was to call out the army; and this was a slow procedure. It was not safe for women to be on the streets at night.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the densely populated cities, many homeless children roved the

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[1]Rufus M. Jones, Later Periods of Quakerism (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1921), I, p. 350.

[2]Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 230.

streets. They roved about sleeping in corners, barns, drains, and cellars. These urchins were fatherless, friendless, and penniless. Society looked upon them as the scum of the earth — pieces of driftwood from the sea of life. Their condition gave rise to the horrible workhouses, an attempt to furnish homes for unfortunate children, and to change their lives through teaching and training. But the purpose of these workhouses was defeated; for most of the governesses were neither qualified nor fit to run them. These places became a nightmare to all the children who lived there, and they tried to escape at every opportunity. Charles Dickens in his immortal Oliver Twist (1838) did more to awaken the conscience of the public to the evils of this institution than any other writer. So much, then, for the social conditions of the day. Let us now turn to consider the natural sequel, the moral state of the nation.

An Ominous Outlook

With the coming of war morals usually go. Or if they do not go entirely, they always experience a considerable slackening. This is a commonly accepted fact -- one which is borne out by history -- and the days which preceded and immediately followed the Napoleonic wars are no exception to this rule.

It is not surprising, as another points out, that Jane Austen tends to minimize the effects of the war on English life. She was moving in circles and depicting scenes unknown to the great masses of men. "In the mirror that Miss Austen held up

to nature in the drawing-room, it is hard to detect any trace of concern or trouble arising from the war."[1] But though this war was not fought on British soil, it greatly affected life at every turn and level of society. If the great Samuel Johnson had been living fifty years later, he would have found little change in the morality of the day.

> To the mass of people, indeed, religion was almost unknown. Their morals were, for the most part, more degraded than those of beasts. Drunkenness was not merely not frowned upon: it was fashionable. 'I remember,' said Dr.Johnson, 'when all the decent people in Lichfield got drunk every night, and were not thought the worse for it.'[2]

Consequently during the early years of the nineteenth century the moral and intellectual condition of the children of the lower classes presented the saddest spectacle of ignorance and depravity that could be seen in any Protestant country in the world.[3] When Mrs. Hannah More attempted to set up her reform schools, she met strong opposition on the part of the villagers. Drunkenness, immorality, and vice were all but indescribable. "But how we shall be able to keep up these things with so much opposition, vice, poverty, and ignorance, as we have to deal with, I cannot guess."[4] At one village she found that the incumbent was intoxicated at least six times a week, and was "very

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[1]Trevelyan, History of England, pp. 582 f.

[2]Robert S. Skeats, A History of the Free Churches of England (2d. ed.; London: Arthur Miall, 1869) p. 380. The quotation from Dr. Johnson is found in Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson (London: Routledge, Warnes, and Routledge, 1859), V, p. 38.

[3]Ibid., pp. 480 f.

[4]William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1834), II, p. 213. Letter to Mrs. Kennicott.

frequently prevented from preaching by two black eyes, honestly earned in fighting."[1] At the village of Mendip she found the miners so utterly depraved that no constable would ever dare go there to execute the duties of his office.[2] Drunkenness was, perhaps, the greatest curse of the day. For to it may be attributed the majority of other vices. Men would spend money for drink when they actually did not know where they would get their next meal. Intoxication was looked upon as the national vice in the early nineteenth century, as it had been in the preceding century.[3]

Coupled with this evil was immorality of every sort. Women played fast and loose with the moral law and sold themselves to evil works. Prostitution was rife.

> An account of women's life at this period ought to include a reference to the great army of prostitutes. It had existed in all ages, and its ranks had grown with the increase of wealth and population in the country. Except for 'rescue work' which the pious were now actively taking in hand, the evil was left untouched. It infested towns without the least public control; 'the harlot's cry from street to street' made public resorts hideous at nightfall.[4]

Low wages, the decline of manufacturing in the cottages, the poor economic state of single women, and the utter lack of religious training caused many women to adopt a practice which

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[1] Ibid., p. 209. Letter from Miss Hannah More to William Wilberforce, 1789.

[2] Skeats, op. cit., p. 482.

[3] C. J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1887) p. 304.

[4] Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 490.

they abhorred. To keep from actually starving to death "they bowed the head for bread."[1] This evil was very general, not only among those of the lower strata who lived in the capital or the other large cities, but also in the small towns and rural areas. It is not at all surprising to note that the rate of illegitimacy was alarmingly high in the great industrial and metropolitan areas. But it is surprising that it was very high in the rural districts also, and that in a few of the worst of these the per cent of illegitimacy was more than double the rate for England as a whole.[2] However, as the century wore on, wages were increased, living conditions improved, and this horrible practice declined to some extent.

Cheap and profane talk was the fashion of the day. Most of the literature was of the same sort. It is true that numerous books were published at this time, but few of them were of a helpful character. Much of the literature, even though it was on a higher level than that of the preceding century, was still very sordid. In spite of the efforts of some good and sincere writers, there was little reading material suited to the needs or the purse of the common man. Let us listen to the words of that distinguished and influential author, Sir Walter Scott -- a man who was born in the same year as William Jay.

'We should do great injustice to the present day by

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[1] Ibid., p. 491.

[2] Albert Leffingwell, Illegitimacy and the Influence of Seasons upon Conduct (2d. ed.; London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892), pp. 32 f.

> comparing our manners with those of the reign of George I. The writings even of the most esteemed poets of that period contain passages which now would be accounted to deserve the pillory. Nor was the tone of conversation more pure than that of composition; for the taint of Charles II's reign continued to infect society until the present reign [George III.], when, if not more moral, we are at least more decent.'[1]

Bull-baiting and bear-baiting were very popular forms of amusement not only for the poorer classes but for the aristocracy as well. A bull or a bear was chained to a post and was worried and savagely attacked by a pack of hungry dogs. The referee, by cleverly intervening at the right moment, would pull off the dogs, thus enabling the fight to be continued for several days before the unfortunate animal was killed. Cock fights were also very popular, and many men of all classes raised the birds, trained and trimmed them for this type of amusement.

But one of the most popular pastimes was gambling.

> Both sexes gambled freely, the fine ladies and gentlemen even more than the country squires. In London, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells the gaming-table was the central point of interest, while in the manor-house it was of less account than the stables and the kennel. The expenses of gambling and of sport, as well as a noble zeal for building and for laying out gardens and planting avenues, burdened estates with mortgages which proved a heavy clog on agricultural improvement and domestic happiness. Immense sums of money changed hands over cards and dice.[2]

The poor also gambled their meager earnings at the card tables. They actually threw away their wages of the week or even went in debt so that they might have the money with which to amuse themselves in this manner.

The theater offered what was usually a very wholesome

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[1]Abbey and Overton, op. cit., p. 304.

[2]Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 314.

and uplifting form of entertainment. It had first been used at the court; and from that central place it spread into all parts of the kingdom. Highly trained and respectable companies took the plays of Shakespeare and other celebrated Englishmen to the different cities. However it was not until late in the nineteenth century that some parents permitted their children to attend the theaters, thinking them to be very harmful. The Puritans were largely responsible for what theater reforms there were. Of course, not all of the stage performances were of a high type and caliber. There were many cheap, immoral, and downright vulgar shows which had a bad influence on English life in this period. Thus we see that the moral status of English society was at a very low ebb. All classes had much to be done in the way of improvement. With this panoramic view of the political, social, and moral state of the nation, let us now turn to examine her spiritual condition, that we may find the secret of these deplorable evils.

The Soul of the Nation

The early years of the nineteenth century felt the strong impact of the hard rationalism of the previous period. The seeds which had been sown then had borne much fruit in the eighteenth century; and though the trees were not still breaking under their heavy load, they were still bending. "The Church had reached low-water mark before the eighteenth century closed, and the dawn of the nineteenth century synchronized approximate-

ly with the turn of the tide."[1] When Bishop Butler wrote in defense of the Christian cause, it was at a terrible hour -- a time of indifference, irreligion, and outright scorn for things sacred. That writer reminds us that "it had come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry: but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious."[2] These words aptly depict the age before us. It was a time when men of culture felt that they would increase their standing by making light of anything that savored of religion. We sense their lack of respect and utter scorn for things sacred in the following parody on the Ten Commandments.

A French Version of the Ten Commandments

I

No Gods we'll have, like fools of old;
No Deity we'll own, but Gold.

II

Saints, Images you may purloin,
And turn them into real coin.

III

God's name you shall no more adore,
For all above us we abhor.

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[1]J. H. Overton, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century 1800-1833 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., n.d.), p. 3.

[2]Joseph Butler, Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature (London: MacMillan and Co., 1900), p. xvii.

IV

No more on Sundays read or pray,
For all Religion's done away.

V

Regard no more what Parents say,
Each Child is free to take his way.

VI

No more are we forbid to kill;
Cut throats and murder when you will.

VII

The word Adult'ry now disown,
And all men's wives treat as your own.

VIII

Steal anything you meet by chance,
For Thieving now is Law in France.

IX

False witness bear in everything
To cut off Noblemen and King.

X

Covet, and take whate'er you see;
French Liberty makes all things free.[1]

But for the grace of God, what happened in France might have happened in England.

When we consider the condition inside the church, we find matters equally bad.

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[1]The Bath Chronicle, October 31, 1793, Vol. 32, No.1674 and printed by R. Cruttwell. Author not given.

> Unbelieving bishops and slothful clergy had succeeded in driving from the church the faith and zeal of Methodism, which Wesley had organized within her pale. The spirit was expelled and the dregs remained. That was the age when jobbery and corruption, long supreme in the state, had triumphed over the virtue of the church; when the money-changers not only entered the temple, but drove out the worshippers; when ecclesiastical revenues were monopolized by wealthy pluralists; when the name of curate lost its legal meaning, and instead of denoting the incumbent of a benefice, came to signify the deputy of an absentee; when church services were discontinued; when university exercises were turned into a farce; when the holders of ancient endowments vied with one another in evading the intentions of their founders; when everywhere the lowest ends were most openly avowed, and the lowest means adopted for effecting them. In their preaching, nineteen clergymen out of twenty carefully abstained from dwelling upon Christian doctrines. Such topics exposed the preacher to the charge of fanaticism. Even the calm and sober Crabbe, who certainly never erred from excess of zeal, was stigmatized in those days by his brethren as a Methodist, because he introduced into his sermons the motives of future rewards and punishments. An orthodox clergyman (they said) should be content to show his people the worldly advantage of good conduct, and leave the heaven and hell to ranters.[1]

The church was so closely bound up in the life of the state that it was very difficult to distinguish the one from the other. "Thus did the ecclesiastical constitution of the country harmonize with the political. The landed gentry were masters equally of the ecclesiastical as of the civil administration."[2] There had been a time when the church was meeting a great need and enjoying the respect and esteem even of those who did not belong to it. But now it had lost its hold upon the people. It was wholly out of touch with the masses and it had never been so un-

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[1] Edinburgh Review, as quoted by the Rev. William H. Dyer in A Sketch of the Life and Labours of the Late Rev. William Jay (London: Ward and Company, 1854), pp. 6 f.

[2] Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 394.

popular since the days of Charles I.[1] There was no definite plan to meet the needs of the times. The church was pitifully behind in its building program. The churches were wholly inadequate to cope with the expanding population. Look at the situation which existed in London and its vicinity. "The urban parishes within eight miles of St. Paul's -- exclusive of the City, which even then was over-churched -- had a population of 1,162,300, whilst the churches and Anglican chapels could accommodate only 220,000."[2] Of course, we must say in all fairness to both the Establishment and the British Government that little attention, much less money, could be given to erecting new churches while the nation was engaged in a life and death struggle with Napoleon.[3]

But we must go much deeper than any mere lack of physical equipment if we would put our finger on the trouble. Buildings aid, but they do not make a church. A large measure of this ecclesiastical lethargy and falling away must be laid directly upon the shoulders of an irreligious and irresponsible clergy. With few exceptions they were a corrupt, incompetent, and lackadaisical lot, utterly unconcerned for the spiritual welfare of those whose souls were entrusted to their care. The church suffered at this time from a decline in the caliber of the men

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[1]William Law Mathieson, English Church Reform 1815-1840 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), p. 45.

[2]Mathieson, op. cit., p. 18.

[3]J. H. Overton, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century 1800-1833), p. 148.

who were leading her. Many of them had chosen to wear the cloth because they felt it to be a good, soft, easy living. As long as the war lasted, the Army had a great appeal for young men. But when it ended, many chaplains "descended on the country parsonages, and combined the stipend of their living with the half-pay of retired officers."[1]

Many of the clergy took advantage of their enviable position and sense of security. They had a national monopoly of all religious rites since they were members of the Church of England.[2] The most common fault was that they literally lay down on the job. The Establishment was an extremely wealthy body and the clergy, for the most part, conformed to their surroundings. Some actually refused to do anything. "Lord Chancellor Hatherley contributed to the same debate the story of an incumbent who closed his church and obstructed the door by a dunghill, and whose ejection was only brought about after five years' litigation, at a cost of £12,000."[3]

One of the worst practices in which they indulged was the sale of advowsons. A man might hold simultaneously a number of livings from different parishes. Some have been known to hold as many as eight.[4] These benefices were auctioned off

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[1]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 395.

[2]Trevelyan, History of England, p. 329.

[3]Francis Warre Cornish, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1910), Part II, pp. 181 f.

[4]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 397.

to the highest bidder as if they had been cattle. Nothing was done to stop the sale of livings until 1898.[1] How, then, were these combined parishes cared for, since they were under the spiritual jurisdiction of one person, and he often far away? The rector or vicar appointed a curate at a meager salary and the rector took the remainder of the money for himself. This practice was a ruination to the church. There are cases on record of parish churches having been so dreadfully neglected through this evil that the buildings actually fell in. When a new minister was installed in such a parish the service was conducted in a tent which had been put up just for the occasion. It was then taken down when the absentee clergyman left for his home in the distance.[2] Many vicars lived as far as two hundred miles from their parishes and knew nothing of what was going on there and cared less. They collected their large salaries and lived like squires while many of their people were living in filth and rags and eking out a meager existence on a starvation diet.

The clergy of the Establishment were, as a body, utterly lacking in consecration. Most of them were men who were bent on enjoying themselves to the utmost. They were fond of following the chase or riding hard after the fox; and were not averse to the "light refreshments" which accompanied such gatherings.

Intemperance, though becoming much less of a scandal, was still common; and not all the offenders could plead the

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[1]Mathieson, op. cit., footnote 4 on page 6.

[2]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 398.

> excuse which startled Bishop Blomfield: 'But, my lord, I never was drunk on duty.' Country clergymen were notoriously fond of shooting and fox-hunting, especially the latter; and in the newspapers, in a list of advowsons for sale, one might read, 'Single duty in a good sporting country and in the neighbourhood of the ----- hounds'; or that 'the Rev. Lord Henry Fitzroy, Prebendary of Westminster,' was disposing of his racing stud.[1]

When the pluralist had several churches that were not too far apart, he would often serve them himself and not appoint a curate, and thus save this salary for himself. On Sunday morning he would mount his horse and ride poste-haste from one church to another, hurriedly conducting a service shortened for the purpose, and rushing to the next one. In the event that it was raining too hard, he did not so much as put in his appearance; and the people, accustomed to his negligence, did not even expect him on a rainy day. "No one was the least surprised. Dr. Drop, they said, was taking the service that Sunday."[2]

The Silver Lining

We would be doing a grave injustice to the cause if we depicted only the darker side -- if we dealt only with the doubts and darkness, the shams and shadows -- and never once saw the sun breaking through the clouds. The early nineteenth century was in many respects a grand and glorious age. It was a day of daring and discovery.

> And even while the war was raging, her creative spirit, sheltered behind her fleet, blossomed as in the age of Eliz-

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[1]Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 6 f.

[2]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 398.

> abeth. The era of Nelson and Wellington, of Fox and Pitt, of Castlereagh and Canning, was also the era of Wordsworth and Coleridge, of Scott and Byron, of Shelley and Keats, of Turner and Constable, of Cobbett and Wilberforce, of Bentham and Owen, and many more. The men of that day seemed to inhale vigour and genius with the island air. Though social order was much amiss and the poor suffered, among the more favoured classes the individual reached a very high point of development during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, in its first contact with the old rural life and the still surviving culture and freedom inherited from the Eighteenth Century.[1]

The spirit of enterprise was seen all about. Whether it showed itself in the conquests of a Cook, the words of a Wordsworth, the work of a Wilberforce, or the love of a Livingstone, it was everywhere in evidence. This was a time of great men and of great movements. "Few epochs have been richer in great and good men, or in devotion to noble causes. Indeed as one thinks of the outstanding agencies for the uplift and betterment of mankind, active in the life of our own day, in almost every case one can trace the origin back to the exciting and perilous years of the Napoleonic wars."[2]

During this period great strides were made in the educational world. Listen to the words of that eminent scholar and writer of the day, John Henry Newman: "We live in a wonderful age; the enlargement of the circle of secular knowledge just now is simply a bewilderment, and the more so, because it has the promise of continuing, and that with greater rapidity, and more signal results."[3]

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[1]Trevelyan, History of England, p. 508.

[2]E. A. Payne, op. cit., pp. 18 f.

[3]John Henry Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua, being A History of his Religious Opinions (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1890), p. 260.

This was also a day of far-reaching reforms in both church and state. The greatest single accomplishment of this nature was the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and the subsequent passage of the Slave Emancipation Act in 1833. A historian pays this glowing tribute to the fight put up by William Wilberforce in this achievement. "It was a turning-point in the history of the world when William Wilberforce and his friends succeeded in arousing the conscience of the British people to stop the slave trade in 1807, and to abolish slavery in the Empire in 1833."[1] Philanthropy flourished on an unprecedented scale. Sweeping changes were brought about in the factories and mines and life for the working man became more livable. The Parliamentary Reform Bill of 1832 was very beneficial; and in 1847 the Factory Act was passed.

But we have saved for the last a most important movement-the splendid missionary advance along all lines. "But one fact was common to the whole Christian world. Through safer and accelerated inter-communion the world had become a smaller place. The problem of the non-Christian peoples came home with a new urgency. The nineteenth century was a century of Foreign Missions."[2]

Even though it appeared to a casual observer that the forces for right and truth had been driven from the field and

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[1]Trevelyan, History of England, p. 599.

[2]Hugh Watt, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries (London: James Clarke and Co., 1927), p. 244.

that there was not a single soul who cared a particle what was taking place, a more careful consideration will prove this to be false. For wherever the clouds were darkest -- wherever the fight was thickest -- there stood a gallant little band fighting heroically for the cause of God and stemming the oncoming tide. It was at this period that the great evangelical lamp burned steadily and the full effects of Evangelicalism were being seen and felt in every sphere of endeavor and by all classes of society. We are indebted to the Evangelicals for whatever brightness there was on the horizon -- for the silver lining.

The Leaven in the Lump

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Evangelicalism was little more than a faint echo in the distance. A hundred years later it was a deciding factor in English history. The Evangelicals were a very small group at the dawn of the eighteenth century. A hundred years later they had increased to a considerable force. At the outset there was a certain stigma attached to the very name. Men scorned and ridiculed the Evangelicals. By the middle of the nineteenth century there was hardly a greater compliment which one could receive than to be numbered among them. Almost every reform or movement for the betterment of mankind which was instituted at that time owed its existence to this group of sincere and fervent Christians. They took the lead in sponsoring public education on a national scale.[1]

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[1]Cornish, op. cit., II, p. 276.

Dueling was abolished primarily through the untiring efforts of the Evangelicals. They promoted the Church Temperance Reformation Society.[1] It was they who had pointed out the way in the Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the Missionary Societies, and had given the church a certain temper and tone which were sorely needed. Into the prisons, asylums, factories, and mines they went and things always happened. They kept the religious flame, which had flickered so low, from going out entirely. They set the pace in church attendance and in the building program. Their personal piety was an inspiration to all.

> They rescued the old tradition of Puritan seriousness and strictness of life from the Pharisaism of respectability into which it had sunk, warmed it into life by what their opponents called 'enthusiasm', and set an example of unobtrusive godliness which, however open to ridicule and censure, raised the level of family life in England, and did noble service in the cause of philanthropy.[2]

The eminent French historian, Halevy, also pays a glowing tribute to this cause.

> Men of letters disliked the Evangelicals for their narrow Puritanism, men of science for their intellectual feebleness. Nevertheless during the nineteenth century Evangelical religion was the moral cement of English society. It was the influence of the evangelicals which invested the British aristocracy with an almost Stoic dignity, restrained the plutocrats who had newly risen from the masses from vulgar ostentation and debauchery and placed over the proletariate a select body of workmen enamoured of virtue and capable of self-restraint. Evangelicalism was thus the conservative force which restored in England the balance momentarily destroyed by the explosion of the revolutionary forces.[3]

Throughout his three large volumes this writer is untiring in his

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[1] Ibid., p. 103.

[2] Ibid., I, p. 9.

[3] Halevy, op. cit., III, p. 166.

praise of the Evangelicals. It was his firm belief that Evangelicalism had saved England from a bloody revolution, such as his country had experienced, and in turn prepared the soil for the gradual revolution which followed on more peaceful lines.

Evangelicalism within the Establishment

One naturally wonders what was the ratio of evangelical clergy to the moral preachers of the day. What was their numerical strength? Since the number of Evangelicals was rapidly increasing throughout our period, it is impossible to be absolutely certain as to the exact ratio. Historians differ considerably among themselves on this matter. However, toward the middle of the nineteenth century the ratio was approximately one in five.[1] "And within the Church the influence of the Evangelicals was growing stronger every day. The number of clergymen who had given their formal adherence to the party were estimated at between two and three thousand."[2] They were a considerable body, both in numbers and in influence. "But in this sketch it must suffice to say that before the nineteenth century began the Evangelical clergy had become a very numerous and influential body within the Church of England."[3]

In spite of the fact that the number of evangelical

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[1] Ibid., p. 165. Vide footnote 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 165.

[3] J. H. Overton, Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1886), p. 85.

clergymen within the bounds of the Church of England had greatly increased and matters had begun to be somewhat better, there was still a great deal of room for improvement. The message preached by the ordinary clergyman was cold, moralistic, and uninspiring. It was anything but the Gospel. An older member of the clergy took to task one of his younger brethren who had evangelical leanings. "If you go on preaching that stuff you will drive all your parish mad. Were you to inculcate the morality of Socrates, it would do more good than canting about the new birth."[1] This is by no means an isolated or exaggerated case. It represents the attitude of literally thousands of English clergymen of this period. In fact, one can safely say that it truly represents all of them who were not evangelically inclined. This is borne out by William Jay.

> 'In the Church of England there was nothing which the evangelical clergy who visited Bath would, according to their views, consider the Gospel; and none of them could gain admittance into any pulpit of the Establishment here for many years after my settlement, except that of my respected father-in-law, who was then officiating at Bath-easton, though his living was at a distance.'[2]

Another hindrance to the Evangelical cause within the Establishment was the fact that many of its first-line leaders who had been so great had died before the nineteenth century, and their successors were not of the same mental or spiritual caliber.[3]

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[1]A Member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings, Life and Times of Salina Countess of Huntingdon (London: William Edward Painter, 1840), I, p. 280.

[2]William H. Dyer, A Sketch of the Life and Labours of the Late Rev. William Jay (London: Ward and Co., 1854), p. 7.

[3]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 434.

It is very unfortunate for the church that such should have been the case. It was not so much that the later Evangelicals were inferior. It was rather that their predecessors had been giants, and it was difficult to carry on in the same manner as they had done. They had a great love for their fellowmen of all stations of life, and preached to them the simple but stirring message of Christ's redeeming love. As great a man as Samuel Johnson paid this tribute to the Evangelicals of his day.

> 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner which is the only way to do good to the common people and which Clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty when it is suited to their congregations.'[1]

It was the fervor of the evangelical clergy which enabled the church to shake off her sleep and drowsiness and seek to fulfil her mission. It was they who attempted to lead the church back to the Cross. The Movement itself has been described by Mr. Gladstone as a "strong, systematic, outspoken, and determined reaction against the prevailing standards both of life and preaching. It aimed at bringing back on a large scale, and by an aggressive movement the Cross and all that the Cross essentially implies . . .. There is now, and can be, little question that they preached Christ."[2] We may be inclined to take the great accomplishments of the Evangelicals far too lightly, and to forget that they supplied the spiritual vitality of the church.

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[1]James Boswell, Life of Samuel Johnson, as quoted by A.L. Hunt in Evangelical By-Paths (London: Charles J. Thynne and Jarvis, Ltd., 1927), p. 62.

[2]William Ewart Gladstone, Gleanings of Past Years 1843-79 (London: John Murray, 1879), VII, p. 207.

Imagine what the church would have been without them! But we do not have to imagine that. We can know! The historian has described for us that terrible moment when in 1662 the Establishment suffered an irreparable loss. Two thousand, or one fifth of her clergy, the very life blood of the church, were expelled from her precincts to become Nonconformist ministers.

> The Church of England stood from that moment isolated and alone among all the Churches of the Christian World. The Reformation had severed it irretrievably from those which still clung to the obedience of the Papacy. By its rejection of all but episcopal orders, the Act of Uniformity severed it as irretrievably from the general body of the Protestant Churches, whether Lutheran or Reformed. And while thus cut off from all healthy religious communion with the world without, it sank into immobility within. With the expulsion of the Puritan clergy, all change, all efforts after reform, all national development, suddenly stopped. From that time to this the Episcopal Church has been unable to meet the varying spiritual needs of its adherents by any modification of its government or its worship. It stands alone among all the religious bodies of Western Christendom in its failure through two hundred years to devise a single new service of prayer or praise.[1]

The Church of England has never fully recovered from that loss and ~~doubtless~~ perhaps never will. But it was the Evangelicals of later years who rushed into the breach and as far as it was humanly possible supplied the need. We have seen Evangelicalism within the Establishment. Let us now turn to examine it without.

Evangelicalism and Nonconformity

Some might suppose that all Nonconformists were Evangelicals, but such was by no means the case. Not all of them spent

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[1]John Richard Green, op. cit., p. 623.

their energies fervently proclaiming the risen Christ to a lost and dying world. Some of them engaged in the religious controversies of the moment, or in matters of a purely secular nature. Many of them freely used their pulpits to discuss political issues; others blazed new trails in their fight for religious freedom. "When in succeeding centuries the spirit of democracy required expression in religion, it found it in the safety-valve of the Non-conformist sects."[1] We must bear in mind the fact that even though all Nonconformists had been granted some semblance of freedom by the Toleration Act, they were, nevertheless, still struggling against terrible odds and opposition. The Test and Corporation Acts were not repealed until 1828. Nonconformists were still crying out against practical grievances even after 1833. They wanted to be excused from contributing to the support of Anglican worship, to be allowed to be married in their own chapels and buried in regular cemeteries by their own ministers. They wished free access to the universities. A secular state, they believed, should observe neutrality towards all creeds.

But what was the state of Evangelicalism among the various Nonconformist bodies? The most accurate method of ascertaining the evangelical state of Nonconformity is to consider carefully the various denominations which make it up. We shall now examine each of the dissenting bodies so that we may properly evaluate its Evangelicalism in the first half of the nineteenth century.

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[1]Trevelyan, History of England, p. 330.

The Methodists

We quite naturally turn to the Methodists and deal with them first, and that for two reasons. Their life originated with and was bound up in that of the Establishment; and their own accomplishments merit for them the place of primacy.

> Methodism, like Puritanism, might have been to a large extent, preserved as so much vital force within the national Church; but neither were allowed a place within its precincts. By a hard, narrow, unsympathetic, and exclusive policy, both these parties were forced into a position outside; and the same policy which ejected so many clergymen at the Restoration, and threw off the Wesleyan revivalists, also increased these sections of Dissent in point of numbers.[1]

When the great John Wesley passed on to his eternal reward in 1791, he had gathered some eighty thousand persons into the societies which he left behind.[2] Due to his personal oversight and strong powers of leadership these societies enjoyed a homogeneity throughout his lifetime. However, as soon as he was gone, this harmonious spirit was lost, and a period of secessions followed. The first division from the general body of Methodists occurred in 1797 when Alexander Kilham, one of Wesley's preachers, withdrew to form the Methodist New Connexion. The progress of the group was very slow due to the early death of Kilham. During the years 1807 and 1812 others withdrew to form the Primitive Methodist Connexion, the most successful of all

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[1]John Stoughton, Religion in England Under Queen Anne and the Georges 1702-1800 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878), II, p. 205.

[2]Wearmouth, op. cit., p. 14.

Methodist secessions. Hugh Bourne was the prevailing spirit of this new group. He was a staunch believer in religious camp meetings; and when this new type of open air service was officially banned, he, along with William Clowes and James Steele, was expelled from the Wesleyan Connexion and formed their followers into this new group. In 1815 F. W. Bourne and William O' Bryan refused to be confined within the official limits of Methodism, withdrew and formed another sect known as the Bible Christians. A further disturbance arose at Leeds over the introduction of an organ. The small and comparatively insignificant group which withdrew called themselves the Protestant Methodists. In 1835 further trouble arose over the administration of the first theological college and another withdrawal ensued. What is characterized as "the most bitter conflict of Methodist history"[1] began in 1849. This dispute, which cost the official Methodist body over one hundred thousand members, was caused when ministers and laymen demanded a greater share in the government of the church. But in spite of the fact that the course of Methodism did not run smoothly, the cause of Methodism prospered.

> Although the first half of the nineteenth century can be regarded as the most turbulent in the history of the Methodist Church, yet strange to say it has been the most successful. Throughout the whole of this time, with only one or two exceptions, a continual advance was registered. It was evidently a case of multiplication by division. Methodism developed more rapidly after the death of John Wesley than it did during his lifetime.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 15.

[2] Ibid.

In 1801 the total number of Methodist meeting-houses was only eight hundred and twenty-five. Fifty years later there were eleven thousand, with a seating capacity of nearly two and a quarter millions, or approximately one eighth of the entire population.[1]

Methodism exerted the most vital and effective religious and social influence of the period. Its closely knit organization, its far-reaching method of itineration, and its dynamic message of redemption made it the most effective striking force of its day. John Wesley's far-sighted and detailed organization enabled Methodism not only to stand, but to help greatly in the reorganization of society. "In the vast work of social reorganization which is one of the dominant characteristics of nineteenth-century England, it would be difficult to overestimate the part played by the Wesleyan revival."[2] The trade unions which so greatly fostered the working man were to a large extent the result of Methodism, which was first, last, and always the movement of the common man. It reached a class in society which had been sorely neglected, if not entirely ignored.

> Against the lack of sympathy for the depressed classes, the positive and impassioned concern of the Methodists was noonday to midnight. They sought them out in the garrets and cellars, prisons and workhouses; they visited them in lonely places of squalor and crowded areas of destitution, in highways and in byways; they carried to the despised the gospel of Divine Love and Compassion; they manifested loving-kindness to them and gave emphasis to each man's innate dignity; they invited them to their preaching-houses and asked them to join their Societies and find companionship and

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[1] Ibid., p. 17.

[2] Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 425.

> friendship; they provided opportunities for them to exercise their gifts in a growing fellowship. By means of Methodism, the forsaken and forgotten multitudes entered into a twofold and transforming faith, belief in God and belief in God's purposes for mankind, beginning with themselves. They were rescued from moral and social paralysis; it was the miracle of the healing of the withered arm.[1]

Methodism was in touch with life at every turn. It was alive to the needs of the people -- social, spiritual, and economic. It was truly evangelical, and it is not surprising that when the call was given, countless thousands rallied to her banners and are doing so today. "It is still thoroughly Evangelical in spirit, while using to the full the advantages which its splendid organisation affords."[2]

The Independents

Independency in the first half of the nineteenth century presented a very vital and healthy picture. It had been slowly gaining ground throughout the previous century. In London in the first generation of the eighteenth century Independency was outstripped by Presbyterianism. But during the last forty years of the century the relative position and strength of the two bodies was materially changed.[3] Presbyterianism had noticeably declined and Independency had increased. This was true not

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[1]Robert F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), p. 267.

[2]W. B. Selbie, Nonconformity Its Origin and Progress (London: Williams and Norgate, n.d.), p. 192.

[3]Stoughton, op. cit., p. 247.

only in regard to numbers, but also social standing.

> It is true, that at the close of the hundred years, people of title, and celebrities descended from Cromwell's aristocracy, could not be found in London meeting-houses; but the rank and file of congregations had then risen to a better social position. The quiet habits, the inexpensive mode of living, the industrial energy, and the self-reliance of a staunch Independent could not but be conducive to his worldly prosperity, in spite of prejudices incurred by his peculiar opinions. By economy and diligence, the people who chiefly filled the modest buildings set apart for worship got on in the world beyond many of their neighbours.[1]

What was true of Independency in the nation's capital at the close of the eighteenth century was, for the most part, the story elsewhere. It presented a bright and encouraging outlook.

The prevailing character of the preaching was strongly evangelical. However, as was the case with Nonconformity in general, not all of the Independent ministers were evangelical. The majority of them were mild Calvinists, and had been able to steer clear of the pitfalls into which many of their Presbyterian friends had fallen. Their fervent preaching was a strong reaction to the cold formality and appalling indolence of the clergy of the Establishment. It worked wonders; ". . . a wave broke on shores of silence; a fountain opened amidst the hills, watering dry and thirsty fields."[2] The historian lists the Independent minister, William Jay,[3] as the representative of the Dissenters and one who "wrought a decided and extensive change"[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 362.

[3] William Jay's Evangelicalism is fully dealt with in Chapter V of this thesis, The Religious Thought of William Jay.

[4] Stoughton, op. cit., pp. 362 f.

in the preaching of the day.

This was a time of great activity on the part of consecrated Christians. The Evangelicalism of the Independents could not be hidden. It showed itself in the many aspects of English life -- a life which was becoming more complex every day. Those men not only preached the simple message of redemption through Christ, but they also labored in other helpful causes. Many new chapels were built, and the number of religious services greatly increased. Part of their zeal was devoted to the all-important task of founding their own schools and colleges to which they might send their children. The Dissenters were permitted to study at the University of London in 1825,[1] and to receive a degree in 1837, but they were still excluded from Oxford and Cambridge until well past the middle of the century. Though some measure of freedom had been granted, they were still battling for their lives.

> These were times, indeed, in which Dissenters had not yet recovered from the effects of the long period of repression which followed the Toleration Act. As some of the Trust deeds of chapels made at the period (notably that of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham) attest, they scarcely felt assured of the right to exist. They were grateful for small mercies, and did not venture to contemplate that struggle for religious equality which has subsequently become so alarming to Churchmen.[2]

Independency owed much to the Methodists, as did the other denominations. The Independents captured something of

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[1]Elie Halevy, A History of the English People 1815-1830, II, trans. E. I. Watkin (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1926), p. 187.

[2]"The Congregational Worthies," as found in The Congregational Review, January, 1890, p. 14. The first article in this series on Congregational Worthies deals with William Jay.

the great evangelical spirit of their Methodist friends, but their organization was quite different. Itineration, which had been used so effectively by the Methodists as an integral part of their program and policy, was not extensively employed by the Independents. The latter group usually established chapels and through this means attempted to work out into the various villages. One can readily see that by this method the remote villages and isolated cottages could hardly be reached.

In 1795, after much preliminary work, the London Missionary Society was formally organized by Evangelicals of the various denominations.[1] In 1799 the Church Missionary Society was founded by the Evangelicals of the Establishment, and the Episcopalians who had previously joined the London Missionary Society withdrew to unite with their own. The Methodists and Scotch Presbyterians soon formed their own organizations. This quite naturally left the Independents in charge of the London Missionary Society. The glorious achievements of this organization -- the heroic and sacrificial acts of its sons and daughters --loom large in the annals of history, both secular and sacred.

This great missionary urge had its quickening effect upon the home church. "As was natural, home missionary grew with foreign missionary labor, and for the first time in the ecclesiastical history of England since the Reformation, there was shown an earnest and general desire for the evangelization of the heathen both abroad and at home."[2] The Independents throughout

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[1]Skeats, op. cit., pp. 511 ff.

[2]Ibid., p. 513.

England began to form County and District Associations that they might do their part toward winning the nation for Christ. Many of the far-sighted leaders of the church felt a need for an organization on a level higher than the County or District Associations. They felt that such a body would be beneficial to the individual churches, to English Independency, and to Christ's Kingdom throughout the world. After much thought, planning, and prayer the Congregational Union of England and Wales was founded in May, 1831. The first aim listed in the constitution is this: "To promote evangelical religion."[1] Ever since that date the Union has met in London each May.[2]

The Presbyterians

The Presbyterians had very much in common with the Independents. In fact, Presbyterian ministers often served Independent congregations and Independent ministers frequently officiated at Presbyterian chapels. The story of Presbyterian Evangelicalism in this period of English history may be written in a very few words. Such a thing hardly existed. A hundred years before, the Presbyterians had been the most important of the three old denominations -- the Baptists, Congregationalists,

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[1]Albert Peel, Inevitable Congregationalism (London: Independent Press, 1937), p. 88.

[2]It was my privilege to attend the May meeting of the Congregational Union in London in 1949. I found a large city church with two balconies filled to overflowing. People were admitted by ticket only. This was a most enthusiastic and inspiring church assembly.

and Presbyterians.[1] According to some careful calculators their numbers then equalled the combined total of the Baptists and Congregationalists; and according to another record, the Presbyterians made up two-thirds of Dissent.[2] When the nineteenth century came around, they were all but negligible, and barely comprised a twentieth part of the three denominations.[3] Their congregations were so small that five or six of them would hardly make one good church.

The Presbyterian ministers of the preceding century were among the most brilliant men of their age. They were men of letters, science, and mathematics. They were philosophers with a natural love of inquiry and a longing to get at the bottom of things -- daring devotees of culture and freedom. With men of such remarkable genius at the helm, one would certainly have expected the Presbyterian schools and churches of England to prosper. But the very opposite was true. Presbyterianism came as near dying as it could possibly have done. The blame for this most unwholesome condition rests almost entirely with the clergy who "preferred speculative liberty to Evangelical orthodoxy."[4] The question of ministerial subscription to certain of the Thir-

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[1]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 417.

[2]Ibid.

[3]David Bogue and James Bennett, History of Dissenters From the Revolution in 1688 to the Year 1808 (London: Williams and Smith, 1812), IV, p. 329.

[4]A. H. Drysdale, History of the Presbyterians in England--Their Rise, Decline and Revival (London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1889), p. 533.

ty-Nine Articles had caused English Presbyterians to begin to break into fragments at an earlier date. Those brilliant ministers engaged themselves in the Trinitarian Controversy and others which were raging in the eighteenth century. Most of them became Arians; and from Arianism they drifted into Socinianism, or pure and simple Unitarianism.[1] Many of the Presbyterian churches changed hands and became Congregational or incorporated in other dissenting bodies. Some of them died out entirely. A good number of the wealthier members joined the Establishment, while others found a harmonious church home among the Baptists, the Methodists, or other groups.

> In winding up what has been said respecting English Presbyterianism, it is sufficient to add, that with all the ability of its ministers, all the respectability of its congregations, all the culture of its society, and all the services which it rendered to science, literature, and liberty, it did not advance in numbers or in power. So far from it, its history for fifty years was one of decline. The causes are obvious. A dry, hard, cold method of preaching generally marked the pulpit; warm, vigorous, spiritual life appeared not in the pews. . . . Methodism laid hold on the conscience of England; Presbyterianism did not.[2]

If Presbyterians had remained in this state we would not have needed to deal with them at all. They were not even alive, much less evangelical. However, shortly before 1850 out of the ashes of a once glorious and promising church rose another. 1844: A Tale of Faith and Courage[3] ably describes how the Presbyterian Church of England came to life again.

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[1]Halevy, op. cit., I, p. 405.

[2]Stoughton, op. cit., p. 229.

[3]S. W. Carruthers, 1844: A Tale of Faith and Courage (London: Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England, n.d.) pp. 2 ff.

The Baptists

The entire world is indebted to Baptist Evangelicalism. We shall not, therefore, pause here as elsewhere to ask ourselves whether or not the nineteenth century Baptists were evangelical. The name Baptist has come to be almost synonymous with Evangelical. Let us consider the many ways in which their Evangelicalism of this period has expressed itself.

October 2, 1792, is a date which is dear to the hearts of Christendom. It was on that day that a little band of Baptists, only fourteen in number, founded the Baptist Missionary Society, and William Carey sailed for India shortly thereafter. That epoch-making event has literally changed the complexion of the world and affected the course of history. For it was from this heroic venture of faith that all the great missionary societies received their inspiration and incentive to launch out in the great endeavor of World Missions. Other churches soon followed this example and founded their own organizations.

> Missions are, in spite of many faults, a standing protest against self-indulgence, cynicism, and vanity. Take away foreign missions from the recent history of Britain, and you have robbed that history of its purest glory. No one can have any knowledge of religious society in this country without knowing how noble, unselfish, and courageous is the enthusiasm which carries to the end of the earth young men and women to whom life in Britain is rich in promise. They go forth under no illusions, for the records of their predecessors are before them, and those records are eloquent of privation and death.[1]

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[1]H. Hensley Henson, Christian Morality, Gifford Lectures, 1935-6, p. 245, as quoted by E. A. Payne in The Church Awakes, p. 131.

If the news of Carey's sailing for India thrilled the then Christian world, how much more did it do for his own particular denomination! The Baptists eagerly set themselves to the task of making a more Christian nation out of the homeland. Her ministers preached the great truths of the Gospel with simplicity and effectiveness. The majority of them were not as highly educated as were the clergy of the Presbyterian Church, but what they might have lacked in formal training they made up in zeal for Christ. As was the case with the Methodists, many of their preachers were laymen. It is remarkable what was accomplished for the Kingdom by those consecrated craftsmen. But there were many well trained men of the denomination who distinguished themselves as preachers, theologians, and missionaries. Some of them were tainted by Arianism or Socinianism; but the Baptist ministers as a whole were not influenced by these teachings to the same extent as were the Presbyterians. Even though they had pioneered in religious freedom and toleration, they were far more conservative in their theological beliefs than were the Presbyterians. "It was by the Baptists, in the first instance, that toleration was practised and that the full doctrine of religious freedom was maintained."[1]

The Baptist Church was in touch with life and was very much alive to the needs of the people. The period found many new chapels being erected, schools and colleges founded, and the general outlook one of hope and promise.

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[1]Selbie, op. cit., p. 54.

The Quakers

The Quakers, in their own unique way, were also very active at this period. They had been impressed and moved by the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, and had captured something of its spirit. They looked back upon that revival of religion with great favor, and attached much significance to Evangelicalism.

> The evangelical movement, the rise and progress of which we have already reviewed, remained far into the nineteenth century both in England and America the most important phase of Christian life and thought. In Evangelical circles no other interpretation of Christianity than their own was recognized as having either validity or saving power.[1]

These people in their own quiet and unassuming manner exerted a strong influence on English life. This influence was felt in many ways. Conscience was their guide, and they were utterly fearless in doing what they felt to be right. Some of the Quakers bore personal testimony to the power of Christ in the cities; others went out into the villages as itinerant preachers. "They were all intensely evangelical in their theological sympathies, and they were profoundly convinced that they were 'sent' to proclaim the orthodox faith and to arouse what seemed to them the sleeping Church. . . . They preached doctrine unsparingly, and they spoke with great plainness of speech of what seemed to them heresy."[2] Their strong Evangelicalism caused many of them to

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[1]Rufus M. Jones, op. cit., II, p. 541.

[2]Ibid., I, p. 460.

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[1]Rufus M. Jones, op. cit., II, p. 541.

[2]Ibid., I, p. 460.

cross the seas and bear witness in the United States of America and elsewhere.

But this spirit was manifested in far more ways than in preaching the Gospel or in bearing personal testimony to the power of Christ. The Quakers were untiring in their efforts at prison reform, and some of them will never be forgotten for their labors in those horrible places. They played a very important part in bringing about the abolition of the slave trade and the freeing of the slaves. Their economy and keen business foresight made many of them wealthy; and they used their wealth for the betterment of their fellowmen. They have long refused to bear arms, to take oaths, or to engage in any revolutionary movement; and the world admires and respects them for their scrupulous and conscientious stand. Any nation is proud to claim them as her citizens, for they are the "salt of the earth."[1] What a fitting tribute another has paid to them!

> The Quakers have never attracted the multitude and probably never will, but they have been a most wholesome leaven in the Free Church life of the country, and their influence has been felt far beyond their own borders. Their testimony to religious liberty, and to the spirituality and simplicity of the Gospel, has been more steadily consistent than that of any other religious body.[2]

Retrospect and Prospect

We have endeavored briefly to sketch the historical setting for this study. We have looked back upon the various as-

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[1]Matthew 5:13.

[2]Selbie, op. cit., pp. 108 f.

pects of English life in the first half of the nineteenth century -- the political, social, moral, and spiritual. We have had a good look at the Christian Church. Protestantism, at its best and at its worst, has passed in review before our eyes. Ours has been a broad and general look at Evangelicalism, or the lack of it, as the case may have been. Let us now narrow our scope somewhat and look forward to a glimpse of the great movement as it is mirrored in the life and works of a single Evangelical.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES
of
WILLIAM JAY

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Origins

William Jay was born in the village of Tisbury, Wiltshire, on May 8, 1769.[1] It was at a very auspicious time. For only seven days before, the Duke of Wellington had made his appearance; and, in the same year, Napoleon Bonaparte and Sir Walter Scott were born. He was the fourth, and the only male child, in a family of five children.

His parents were very humble but highly respected people. The father was a kind, honest, and very industrious man who earned his livelihood as a stone-cutter and mason. He had deviated somewhat from the work which one would have expected him to do; for his father before him had been a small farmer. William Jay's mother was also descended from a poor but solid strain. Strength of character, courage, and devotion were written in large letters across her brow. She made a wonderful match for her husband. She went along hand in hand with him, carrying out and even anticipating his desires. Her hard work and thrifty spirit enabled her to have a well ordered home. There

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[1]There is some disagreement as to the exact date of William Jay's birth. For a detailed discussion of this matter see Appendix A, p. 254.

was nothing remarkable about either parent as to talents, and they had very meager education. But what they lacked in formal training they made up in understanding and good common sense. Their sympathetic attitude soon won for them the admiration and esteem of the entire village. Hard work and frugality enabled them to own their home and to rear their children with not only the decencies and necessities of village life but also some of the comforts.

Very little else is known about the forebears of William Jay. We cannot even ~~know~~ identify with absolute certainty which one of the many persons by that name, in the parish register was his own father.

> Through the courtesy of the Rev. J. Ward, Rector of Wath, near Ripon, we have been favoured with a considerable list of persons of the name of Jay, baptized, married, and buried at Milton Lislebon, in Wilts. There is one marriage that may have been that of Mr. Jay's father and mother: "1751, May 13, William Jay and Sarah Smith;" but we have no means of deciding the question. Mr. Jay has said very little of his parents. A Rev. Charles Jay was vicar of that parish in the year 1733, and died there 1761.[1]

But of one thing we may be certain. William Jay was not ashamed of his ancestry. On the contrary, he was exceedingly proud of his father and mother and of those four sisters. In his later years he was very fond of quoting lines from the pen of his greatly admired poet, Cowper, in reference to his humble origin.

> My boast is not that I deduce my birth
> From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography of the Rev. William Jay, eds. George Redford and John Angell James (2d ed.; London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1855), p. 16.

But higher far my proud pretensions rise--
The son of parents pass'd into the skies![1]

Early Days

The cottage in which William Jay grew up was one typical of English rural life. It was a double tenement, thereby allowing much more room than many of the villagers were accustomed to have. It was a very beautiful cottage. Its white walls, thatched roof, dormer windows, and spacious garden formed a picture of contentment. "The cottage in which he lived was the property of his father, and was situated about an equal distance from Wardour Castle and the celebrated Fonthill Abbey. The scenery around the spot was most lovely."[2] This village with its gently sloping hills, its little valleys, its trees and grass and flowers, made an impression on the mind of this young boy which stayed with him throughout his entire life. Often he referred to the scenes of his childhood.

> It is impossible to express the intense pleasure I felt from a child, in the survey of the rural scenery, while standing on the brow of an eminence, or seated upon the upraised root of a branching tree, or walking through a waving field of corn, or gazing on a clear brook with fish and reeds and rushes. How vividly are some of those spots impressed upon my memory still; and how recoverable, at this distance of time, are some of the rude reflections so early associated with them![3]

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[1]William Cowper, "On The Receipt of My Mother's Picture", The Poems of William Cowper ed. J. S. Memes (5th ed.; Glasgow: W. R. M'Phun, 1845), p. 458.

[2]Religious Tract No.996 (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), p. 2.

[3]William Jay, op. cit., p. 20.

Opportunities for even the semblance of an education in the village were meager, to say the least. But the young lad went along with the other children to the school. All that was offered was the three "R's" -- and little there was, indeed, besides the most elementary reading, writing, and arithmetic to awaken, much less to expand, his young mind. There were no signs of precociousness. The very opposite was the case; for he soon gave every indication of dullness and appeared to be headed straight for mediocrity. He encountered great difficulty in even learning to read. When William Jay's oldest sister was questioned concerning his early years and the difficulty he experienced in learning to read, she replied, "We thought he never would have learned."[1]

Village life was very quiet and for some it was even monotonous -- but not for William Jay. Even at this early period he often caught himself wandering far up some lonely lane or scampering up a nearby hill just to be alone.

> But I always felt a strange love of withdrawing myself from my playmates and roving alone; and while pausing among the scenes of nature, of surrendering myself to musings which carried me away, and often left me lost, in doing or enjoying something indistinctly[sic] different from what I had ever actually witnessed.[2]

Here it is that we catch the very first glimpse of the man to be. We do not get so much as a hint of his true self before this moment. And long after he had become a man and a famous preacher someone asked him whether or not as a boy he had

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[1] Ibid., p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

ever felt that someday he might accomplish great things. He admitted that such had been the case with him; and when the questioner pressed him further to ask for the exact moment, he described those musings in the lonely lane.

William Jay accompanied his godly parents from week to week as they went to hear the Presbyterian minister, who was as dry and dead as they are to be found in this world, and yet who was unusually kind. The minister went out of his way to show his interest in the young boy and presented him with the first two books he ever possessed. These were Watts' History of the Old and New Testament,[1] and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Books were then a rarity and the lad was overcome with sheer delight at the thought of having two books all his own.

At this time Thomas Turner, a man who had gone out from Tisbury years before and had emassed a considerable fortune at Trowbridge, wanted to do something for his native village. Being very religious, he wished to render some fitting service and thereby show his gratitude to God and promote the well-being of his fellow men. He first licensed a private dwelling and opened it for worship. Later he erected at his own expense a suitable chapel. William Jay was present on that first Saturday evening when a visitor conducted the service. This youth had heard something of the Methodists who had been going around over the country preaching, and now his curiosity was satisfied. The

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[1]Isaac Watts, A Short View of the Whole Scripture History: With A Continuation of the Jewish Affairs, from the Old Testament till the Time of Christ (London: William Tegg and Company, 1878, but first published in 1732).

singing, the extemporaneous nature of the address, and the unquestioned earnestness of the speaker made a tremendous impression on his young and receptive mind. The minister was speaking from this text: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."[1] These words came upon him, as he says in his characteristically scriptural manner, " --- like rain upon the mown grass, or cold water to a thirsty soul."[2] The service ended, and the next one was announced for seven o'clock the following morning so that it would not conflict with the hour of worship of the Establishment.

From this point onward, the yearning of William Jay's young heart for simple, evangelical truth could not be hidden. That message had stirred him as nothing had ever done before. In the meanwhile, Mrs. Turner, the wife of the retired business man, and a truly pious woman, was doing her part. She took the boy under her personal care, and greatly encouraged him in his spiritual quest. The next morning when she opened the chapel door for the seven o'clock service, William Jay was the first one to enter. Services were now conducted in the village with a considerable degree of regularity. The boy once heard a discourse on the need for family worship in every home. He went to his father and tried to induce him to begin that practice in his own home. But when the father refused, from timidity or

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[1] I Timothy 1:15.

[2] Jay, op. cit., p. 23.

otherwise, young William asked to be allowed to conduct family worship. This permission was granted, and he became a sort of chaplain for his own household.

At this time the Rev. Cornelius Winter was invited to preach in the chapel at Tisbury; and he noticed a very promising lad sitting in the audience. This was his first glimpse of William Jay. When he returned to preach again on a weekday evening one year later, Mrs. Turner introduced the boy to the minister. The lad was only fourteen years of age when this meeting took place. He had been apprenticed to his father to learn the art of stone-masonry; and as he had stopped at the chapel on his way home from working with his father on Fonthill House,[1] he was still wearing his white flannel jacket and his white leather apron. This introduction led to a further meeting, arranged for the following morning, which proved to be one of the important moments of his life. But it was after the evening service that the minister again talked with the boy about his spiritual life and invited him to profess his faith in Christ. This he did. But his conversion was not cataclysmic — not a great and sudden change such as Saul of Tarsus experienced on the road to Damascus. Neither did he feel the utter horror and unbearable weight of his past sins, once he saw the light, as

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[1]Jay, op. cit., p. 24. The editors state that William Jay at this time was working on Fonthill Abbey rather than Fonthill House. But this could not have been the case, and was the subject of no little controversy. For a thorough and conclusive treatment of the subject see note by William Tuck, Appendix B, p. 257.

did Soren Kierkegaard.[1] The change was gradual; nevertheless, it was a real conversion. It was genuine -- so genuine that the next time we see the boy he is a student preparing himself for the Ministry at Cornelius Winter's Marlborough Academy forty miles away.

"So Dreadfully in Earnest"[2]

Few men, much less boys, have ever entered upon a task with such a solemn resolve, fixed purpose, and dreadful earnestness as William Jay evinced when in the early part of 1785 he entered Marlborough Academy and took up his studies for the Ministry. There was a certain urgency, a passionate sense of mission, and an unrelenting search for truth seen in this lad of sixteen that reminds us in many ways of the Master Himself. But apart from this, judging by the standards of the world, William Jay seemed little likely to succeed. He had no money.[3] His clothing was very primitive. His previous training was totally inadequate -- he had not mastered even the most elementary principles of grammar, spelling, or composition. Here is an extract, verbatim et literatim, from the first letter that this young boy wrote to Cornelius Winter. It was written from Tisbury, January 30, 1785.

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[1]Walter Lowrie, A Short Life of Kierkegaard (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 101.

[2]David A. Wilson, Carlyle To "The French Revolution" (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd.,1924), p. 63.

[3]Jay, op. cit., pp. 41 f.

I received your Letter and was very thankfull for your kindness to me in it. You Desired to hear from me by Mr. Serman's return and if I could write you something of my Christian Experience. My experience is that I Desire to Love the Lord above all and Desire to live more to his Glory and honour. I hope I can Say that he is the Cheiftest to my Soul of ten thousand and altogether Lovly I Desire to know nothing but Jesus and Desire to be found in him not having on my own Righteousness which is pulluted with sin and impure but the Righteousness which is of god which is for all and upon all that Believe in him. my father says he will find me in cloths as much as he is able I can come at any time when you think proper So I conclude with my father and mother's Love to you I am your humble servant

William Jay[1]

This is the boy who enrolled as a student in Cornelius Winter's Academy at Marlborough. Mr. Winter was a native of London, having been born in Gray's Inn Lane in 1742. He was brought to a knowledge of the truth under the preaching of George Whitefield and early in life accompanied him on one of his voyages to America.[2] When Cornelius Winter returned to England and was refused ordination in the Established Church because he had preached without having been duly ordained by a bishop, he became a Nonconformist minister and preached at the Bristol Tabernacle. Later in life he moved to Marlborough and from year to year gathered five or six students into his own home and proceeded to instruct them in the ways of truth for future service as ministers of the Gospel.

Life in this school was difficult but exceedingly interesting and pleasant. Here William Jay found himself one of a

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[1]Ibid., p. 35.

[2]Samuel S. Wilson, The Rev. William Jay: A Memoir (London: Binns and Godwin, 1854), pp. 14 f.

large family. The students had free and intimate access to their very capable and godly tutor. William Jay, being a very young and likeable lad, was a favorite with Cornelius Winter. Rarely did his teacher go for a walk without the youth by his side.

Cornelius Winter put tremendous stress on learning. He held out for the highest standards possible, and never took scholarship lightly. To this end, he emphasized the languages. William Jay studied and mastered Latin, and made considerable progress in Greek. But there was something which their early tutor valued even more than mere scholarship. He looked upon the heart as the key to most of life's perplexing problems, and more than that! He considered the heart to be of utmost importance -- the secret of success or failure. Time and again in his lectures he used to quote the great Richard Baxter: "Our work is to win the heart to Christ; and he is not fit to be a pastor who knoweth not how hearts are to be won."[1] It was not that he for one moment minimized the importance of a thorough and scientific training, but rather that he insisted that such training should be Christian throughout, and that the heart should be given its proper place. He believed with Pascal that "The heart has its reasons, which reason knows not."[2] Cornelius Winter had the happy faculty of being able to get the utmost from his students.

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[1] Ibid., p. 24.

[2] Blaise Pascal: The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal, trans. C. Kegan Paul (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), p. 306.

> One grand secret of Mr. Winter's ministerial usefulness lay in the fact that he turned all the incidents of life, all striking events, into a subserviency to pulpit effort; and how wisely Mr. Jay carried out this habit, such as are well acquainted with his ministry, its character and effects, will not require to be informed.[1]

Even though the Marlborough Academy was of a purely private character, it is surprising and disappointing that no reference whatever is made to it in either of the standard works on English Dissenting Academies.[2]

There were constant interruptions in the student life of William Jay. Hardly a week passed, after his first three months at school, without his preaching in one of the nearby villages. Very frequently he went out even during the week to conduct a service in some remote place.

Yet, notwithstanding this perpetual interruption of his

> studies, his diligence and love of study so far compensated for the disadvantages of his position, that, at the expiration of three years, which was the term of his educational course, he could write in pure English style, with much power of thought and force of expression. This is a fiery ordeal for one so young and inexperienced to pass through. How few minds could have borne it -- how few would have escaped without irreparable injury! There is, however, no reason to believe that Jay sustained any loss than that to which he frequently adverts, namely, that of a deeply laid and solid classical education.[3]

During his stay at Marlborough Academy, William Jay developed a fondness for and admiration of Cornelius Winter and

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[1]Wilson, op. cit., p. 17.

[2]Irene Parker, Dissenting Academies in England (Cambridge: University Press, 1914).
H. McLachlan, English Education Under the Test Acts (Manchester: University Press, 1931).

[3]Francis Cunningham, "Review of William Jay's Autobiography," The Christian Observer, June, 1855, p. 391.

his devoted wife that remained with him throughout his entire life. This admiration was mutual; they looked upon this boy as a son. He was their pride and joy, as we gather from the following incident.

> The heavy patriarchal boots he wore in his youth, brought by some means to the house of Mr. Winter, under whose admirable training William was prepared for the Christian Ministry, were carefully preserved in the bedroom of Mrs. Winter, still covered with mortar; and when that godly lady was on her death-bed, she actually had the curtain drawn aside, in order to obtain a last look at those treasured memorials of what Mr. Jay had been in his early youth. So much was the youth esteemed![1]

The difficulties, which at first seemed almost insuperable, were overcome at last and William Jay completed his course of study at Marlborough Academy. There was some talk of offering him the opportunity of continuing his training at Oxford and then later entering the Established Church. But his gracious benefactors, Sir Richard Hill and John Thornton, Esq., who had helped him through school, saw the tremendous good that he was doing, and the appalling need of the villagers, and thought it unwise to suggest such a thing. Since the offer was never made to him, this was one decision which William Jay did not have to make. However, in a letter which he wrote from Bath, July 14, 1846, we have the answer he would have given had he been offered this privilege.

> How thankful I am that I did not when a student (as some of my Episcopalian supporters recommended) leave Mr. Winter's to go to Oxford, where I must have been five or six years before I could be ordained; when during that time I was preaching the gospel to thousands, and saving souls.[2]

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[1]Wilson, op. cit., pp. 8 f.

[2]Jay, op. cit., p. 44.

These words are inserted for one purpose only -- that we may catch the spirit of this nineteen-year-old graduate and sense his great evangelical passion.

In July, 1788, he went to preach for eight weeks for a very close friend of Cornelius Winter, the Rev. Rowland Hill of Surrey Chapel, London.[1] This proved to be one of the most valuable experiences of his life. Those two months in that great metropolis opened a vast new world to him. He learned for the first time the thrill of the throng; for thousands crowded into Surrey Chapel to hear him. He also met and came to know very intimately many ministers and laymen who through the years exerted a tremendous influence on his life. William Jay was offered permanent work in London, but declined. "Before I left town I received applications to settle; but owing to my youth, and being anxious before I became a pastor to receive more preparation for the office, I declined them all, and retired to Christian Malford, near Chippenham."[2]

His First Ministerial Charge

William Jay accepted the call to Christian Malford and took up this work in the autumn of 1788, living free of charge

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[1]William Jay, Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. Cornelius Winter, (2d.; London: Williams and Smith, 1809), pp. 262 f.

[2]Ibid., pp. 48 f.

with a wealthy tradesman.[1] This village was a quiet and peaceful place where he believed that he could resume his studies and help to make up the deficiencies of his short and incomplete training. But such did not prove to be the case. His calls for preaching were numerous and he did not know how to say, "No." Furthermore, he had very few books of his own, and he could not afford to buy others on his meager salary of thirty-five pounds a year. There was no public library, and no one in the village from whom he could borrow. But this period of a little more than a year was by no means a fruitless one. It proved to be a time of great resolves and momentous decisions. He had accepted the fact that his opportunities were somewhat limited, and that if he had any special gifts that might be developed, they lay in preaching. It is here that he made the decision which later put his name before the English speaking world.

> I cannot deny that even at this time I felt enough to excite and encourage a moderate hope that, by the blessing of God in the diligent use of means, I might become a preacher of some little distinction. The work also appeared the noblest under heaven, and to be a sufficient employment in itself. To this, therefore (not entirely neglecting other things), I resolved more peculiarly to dedicate myself, keeping as much as possible from encroachments, and endeavouring to make every thing not only subordinate but subservient to my chosen and beloved aim.[2]

This was also a time when he came to know God as he

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[1]Letters of William Jay, Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, Vol. X, ed. Albert Peel (1927 - 1929, no publisher given), pp. 41 f. A Ltr. from Rev. William Jay to the Rev. Rowland Hill postmarked July 88 but bearing date of August 19 on letter. Mr. Jay states that he has been called to Christian Malford and has accepted it.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 47.

could never have done amid the rush of a busy life in the city. This brief sojourn may well be looked upon as his wilderness experience. For when he was so terribly disappointed at the thought of being deprived of books, another Book was opened to him. Religion became a matter of life and death -- something absolutely vital and extremely personal. In the sermon which he preached on leaving Christian Malford, William Jay manifested a maturity of thought and a fervor of spirit rarely seen in a person three times his age. He sounded a strong evangelical note in the words that follow:

> I repent that I have had no more fervency and importunity with you about the concerns of eternity. O, eternity! eternity! -- that thou hast been no more on the lips of the preacher, and in the ear of the hearer![1]

It was while William Jay was at Christian Malford that he went to Bath several times to preach at Argyle Independent Chapel for the Rev. Thomas Tuppen, whom he had met in London and whose health was poor. After he had been at Christian Malford a little more than a year, he was prevailed upon by Lady Maxwell to supply Hope Chapel at the Hotwells, Bristol. He preached his farewell sermon November 29, 1789, and left immediately to begin his new work.

He Supplies Hope Chapel

Hope Chapel at the Hotwells, Bristol, was one of many

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[1]William Jay, A Farewell Sermon Preached at Christian Malford, Nov. 29, 1789 (Bath: S. Hazard, 1789) as quoted in The Autobiography, p. 54.

places of worship built by Lady Glenorchy, a noble, philanthropic, and pious person. She supplied the money and fully planned this chapel, but her death on July 17, 1786, prevented her seeing its completion. Lady Maxwell, her executrix, found herself with many matters on her hands, among them Hope Chapel. After it was finished, it was supplied for some months by different ministers. However, this plan did not prove satisfactory, and Lady Maxwell secured the services of William Jay as stated supply for Hope Chapel.

He entered upon this task with much zeal and immediately the work began to prosper. This being a new field, he had to build up his own congregation; but he soon filled the chapel. Many of those who attended the services were led to embrace the Christian faith. Three of these became ministers. It was during this stay at the Hotwells that the young minister had the privilege on two different occasions of meeting and talking with the venerable John Wesley.

William Jay remained in this work for about twelve months. He no doubt would have remained longer but for a misunderstanding which occurred when the sub-governess, whom Lady Maxwell had left in charge of the temporal affairs of the chapel, took it upon herself to rule on spiritual matters as well.

At this time the members of Argyle Independent Chapel, Bath, invited William Jay to preach at the opening of their new chapel. The building of this beautiful church was a far-sighted and ambitious task for such a small and relatively poor congregation. It had been built under the leadership of the Rev.

Thomas Tuppen and for his continued ministry, but his health had declined so rapidly that he was unable to preach the opening sermon, as much as the congregation desired it. Responding to the invitation, William Jay preached a very forceful and appropriate message at the opening of Argyle Chapel on Oct. 4, 1789, with Rev. Thomas Tuppen in the audience. As time went on, the condition of the saintly Mr. Tuppen grew worse, until he had to resign his pastorate without having once preached in the new chapel. While he was on his death-bed, the deacons asked him to express his wishes as to a possible successor. He immediately and unhesitatingly recommended William Jay.

Two names were submitted as candidates for the vacant pulpit, William Jay and a Mr. Sibree of Frome.[1] But ultimately it was unanimously decided to call Mr. Jay. He received the call while he was still supplying Hope Chapel and accepted it without hesitation. And so William Jay looked forward to a ministry in Bath, that far-famed and beautiful city.

"The Queen of the West"

"Bath is fitly called the Queen of the West. For beauty of situation, amid high yet sloping hills clothed with verdure, it is not equalled by any English city".[2] The con-

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[1]William Tuck, Notes on the History of Argyle Chapel, Bath, (Bath: Fyson and Co., Ltd., 1906) p. 18.

[2]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath (London: C. J. Thynne, n.d.), p. 13.

trasted magnificence of its crescents and terraces, made of the native stone which lines its hills, gives this city a unique charm. Its history suddenly and irresistibly thrusts itself before you like the ruins of some ancient stone bridge, with its six arches -- the first reaching far back into antiquity, and the last coming down to comparatively recent times. For the records show that Bath had been in existence long before the time of the Roman occupation, and was made famous by its healing springs.[1]

The historian, Trevelyan, in describing the far-reaching effects of those springs goes so far as to say that their waters "... soon made Bath the centre of fashion, luxury and leisure for Romano-British society, desperately resolved to reproduce under leaden skies the gay, lounging life of Imperial Rome."[2]

Bath reached its greatest notoriety, the heyday of its popularity, during the first forty years of the Eighteenth Century under the never-to-be-forgotten Richard Nash, better known to the world of fashion as Beau Nash. This master of ceremonies attracted people to this city from many parts of the world. The Pump Room was the center of ever-increasing activities. For years Bath stood unchallenged as the romantic city of England, the center of fashion and folly. It soon became a veritable den of iniquity, a place where vice ran rampant. When Charles

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[1]R. A. L. Smith, Bath (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1944), pp. 12 f.

[2]G. M. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 20.

Wesley visited Bath and preached there, he said it was like attacking Satan at his headquarters.[1] Oliver Goldsmith wrote, "In this situation of things, people of fashion had no agreeable summer retreat from the town, ... they wanted some place where they might have each other's company, and win each other's money, as they had done during the winter in town."[2] This they found in Bath. Here men and women lived a life of luxury and ease. They were carried about in their cushioned sedan chairs with a semblance of oriental luxury. Each Wednesday there was released in the local paper a list of the newcomers. Examine any one you choose and you will see that it was made up of a large group of very distinguished persons.[3]

But we find that as the eighteenth century begins to fade and the nineteenth begins to dawn, this city has lost much of its former glory as a fashion center.

> At the time of Mr. Jay's settlement some rays of light began to pierce the moral gloom. Simeon of Cambridge and his colleagues were at work; but it is to be feared that this representation is substantially correct in application to the state of things in Bath. The 'Queen of the West' was then, much more than at present, the resort of fashion and folly in the pursuit of pleasure. Revolution and war had closed the continent; some other places of fashionable resort had scarcely risen into notice; and towards the end of autumn, from all parts of the kingdom, weary and worn out people seeking repose and relaxation, -- sick people seeking health, -- the unoccupied seeking diversion, -- gamblers

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[1]Robert Southey, The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism (3d ed.; London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1846), I, chap XIV, p. 388.

[2]Oliver Goldsmith, Life of Richard Nash (Dublin: Dillon Chamberlaine, 1762), p. 25.

[3]The Bath Chronicle, December 13, 1798, XLI, No. 1930.

> seeking prey, -- gentlemen seeking wives, and ladies seeking husbands, flocked to 'the Bath'. Amidst this gathering of gaiety and worldliness, there was no single voice of faithful admonition holding forth a word of life within the pale of the Established Church.[1]

There is hardly a more discouraging or distressing picture than that which has been painted of the church life in the Establishment in early nineteenth century Bath. It is true that there were many beautiful churches. The old Abbey stood in the center of the city, a very impressive and imposing sight. But the church had lost its hold upon the people. It was not fashionable to attend divine worship. The church had become an institution for the weak, the aged, and those who had nothing else to do. "No wonder that infidelity sat enthroned in our high places -- no wonder that philosophy attempted a crusade against the armies of the Lord of hosts -- no wonder, alas, that Religion herself recoiled from the embrace of her friends!"[2]

Nor were the people altogether to blame. The ministers, for the most part, were asleep, totally oblivious to the needs of their people. Their sermons were cold and dull. The music was not appealing.[3] There has hardly lived a more loyal or distinguished churchman than William Wilberforce. And yet, in a personal letter which he wrote to William Jay, encouraging him

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[1]William H. Dyer, Sketch of the Life and Labours of the Late Rev. William Jay (London: Ward and Co., 1854), p. 7.

[2]The Surrey Memorials - Reminiscenses of the Ministers who Officiated at Surrey Chapel, "The Rev. William Jay" (London: W. Brittain, 1842), p. 6.

[3]James Silvester, The Parish Church of Walcot, Bath --Its History and Associations (Bath: W. and F. Dawson, 1888), pp.14 f.

to be very evangelical, he described the state of religion in Bath.

> But indeed, by dear sir, you are 'a debtor to the Greeks and barbarians'. Consider the situation in which you stand. Not another minister in Bath, whom any of the poor wretched upper classes are likely to hear, who preaches the Gospel. They come, perhaps, to your chapel; they never heard the word of life before: they never may have another opportunity. Pity them, my dear sir, as I know you do. They, above all others, deserve to be pitied. I have, alas! been more conversant with them than you, and am, therefore, the more impressed with a sense of their wretched ignorance in spiritual things.[1]

I have dealt with Bath and life in this interesting city at some considerable length; and have had but a single purpose in doing so -- to make a suitable frame for the picture which is to follow. This city was regarded as the place where an Independent minister would be least likely to succeed. What chance for success would a poorly trained, roughly clad, humble servant of Christ have, living in the very shadow of the vaunted Abbey and listening to the sound of its bells peeling forth the call to worship?

Nonconformity in Bath Prior to William Jay's Arrival

The earliest record of a Dissenting Meeting in or near Bath refers to a gathering at the little village of Combe Hay. About the middle of the Seventeenth Century, Mr. Richard Gay, a man of considerable means, appropriated some of the buildings on

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[1]William Wilberforce, A Letter to the Rev. William Jay, (written from "near Bath", Sept. 22, 1803) as quoted in William Jay's Autobiography, p. 304.

his estate to the worship of God.[1] Mr. Gay was himself pastor of the little church, and a few of the more serious people of Bath used to go there for worship before there was any meeting place for Dissenters in the city.

Most of the nonconformist bodies were represented in Bath before William Jay's arrival. The Presbyterians were the first to establish a meeting place there.[2] They erected a chapel for worship in 1692. For many years they were undergoing doctrinal changes which ultimately developed into Unitarianism.

In 1726 Mr. Henry Dolling, a Baptist and at the same time a trustee at the Presbyterian Chapel, withdrew along with a few others of like belief, and licensed his house for public worship. This fact is borne out by the record of the license in the Diocesan Court at Wells, dated January 10, 1726.[3] This Baptist group made considerable progress, until they eventually built a new chapel which was opened for worship on December 25, 1768.

In 1739 the Rev. John Wesley visited Bath. In his Journal under the entry of April 22, 1739, he states that he preached to a crowd of one thousand hearers.[4] He returned on May 22, 1739, gathered a few interested people around him, and formed a religious society. They held their services in a

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[1]Tuck, op. cit., p. 4.

[2]Ibid., p. 5.

[3]Ibid., p. 5.

[4]John Wesley, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley (London: J. Kershaw, 1827), II, p. 189.

small room on Avon Street until, in 1743, they built their first little chapel across the street from their previous meeting place. Mr. Wesley laid the foundation stone of a new chapel which he opened for worship on March 11, 1779.

In 1752 Rev. John Cennick, the erstwhile Methodist but of late a Moravian, visited Bath along with other Moravian ministers of Bristol and Kingswood and formed a Society for worship. Their numbers so increased that they erected a chapel in 1765, and later built a larger one.

The Quakers were also represented at Bath. They erected a small meeting-house shortly before the end of the Seventeenth Century. We are assured of their activity by an encounter which Lady Huntingdon had with one of them in the Pump Room. While she was in this very fashionable place, a Quakeress suddenly felt that she should lift her voice against the present evils. The guests were very much startled and disturbed by her words. They became impatient and restless as she cried out against her wicked age. Whereupon Lady Huntingdon rose, went to the preacher, praised her aloud for her courage and zeal, and then politely ushered her out of the hall![1]

Lady Huntingdon in 1765 purchased a piece of ground in the Vineyards and erected a house and a beautiful chapel, which was opened for divine worship on October 6, 1765, by the Rev.

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[1]A. Barbeau, Life and Letters At Bath In The Eighteenth Century (London: William Heinemann, 1904), p. 160.

George Whitefield.[1] This chapel came to be known as the Vineyards Chapel.[2] The Countess preferred the Calvinistic Methodism of Whitefield to the Arminian Methodism of Wesley. Here the Gospel was preached almost exclusively by ministers of the Church of England or by those who had received Episcopal ordination. The Countess did not allow ministers who had not been duly ordained to preach from her pulpit, but they had to preach from behind the communion table. It was about this time that she had a misunderstanding with the Rev. Rowland Hill, which resulted in her putting out a blanket order forbidding any Dissenter ever again to preach from any of her pulpits. A few of the members withdrew in protest,and were instrumental in the successful founding of what later became Argyle Chapel.

The work of the Independents, or Congregationalists, as they later became known, was somewhat later in getting started than that of the other nonconformist bodies. "Yesterday the meeting in Avon Street was opened by the Rev. Mr. Pharez, late student in the Evangelical Academy in London: and we are credibly informed that Divine Service will be continued there every Sunday.[3] This fact is borne out in the official records of the Evangelical Society.[4] This first service was conducted on Sun-

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[1]By a Member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon (London: William Edward Painter, 1844), I, pp. 467 f.

[2]This chapel is known today as Trinity Presbyterian Church.

[3]Bath Chronicle, Monday, May 29, 1780.

[4]Minute Bk. of "Societas Evangelica" (London, May 12,1780) as cited by William Tuck in Notes on the History of Argyle Chapel p. 8.

day, May 28, 1780, in the little chapel on Avon Street where the Methodists had met before moving to their new chapel. But this work was short lived and was given up as unsuccessful.[1]

At the time of the withdrawal of the group from the Vineyards Chapel, the men who seceded wrote a letter to the managers of the Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, London, stating what had transpired and informing the said managers that "... if they would send a preacher, they would manage to find a place for him."[2] The result of this proposal was the arrival of a young minister by the name of John Holmes. A large stable loft on Tyburn Road was secured and fitted out for worship and it was here that the little group met for several months. Then a site was selected on Morford Street and a Tabernacle was erected at a cost of four hundred pounds. It was opened on June 11, 1783, when the Rev. Rowland Hill preached an appropriate sermon and commended those present for what they had accomplished. The Records of the Diocesan Court at Wells state that the above Tabernacle was registered as a place of worship for Dissenters of the Independent Denomination and a certificate was granted on June 10, 1783, the day before the opening took place. But it was not long before the people discovered that they had made a mistake in building the chapel too far from the center of the city. From time to time Mr. George Welch, a wealthy London banker, and a great friend of the Independents, visited Bath.

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[1]T. S. Jones, The Life of the Right Honourable Willielma, Viscountess Glenorchy (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), p. 478.

[2]Tuck, op. cit., p. 10.

He proposed that the church sell its property and move nearer the center of the city. He went so far as to offer to pay the salary of the minister for three years if this was done. On August 31, 1784, the Tabernacle was sold to the managers of the Vineyards Chapel who believed that by purchasing this building they would bring to nought this church group and cause the members to reunite with the Vineyards Chapel. But this did not prove to be the case; for the Independents purchased the ruins of the Catholic Chapel on St. James' Parade, which had been destroyed by fire in the Gordon Riots of 1780. While the chapel was being restored, services were conducted at Hetling House. Mr. Welch had contributed very freely of his time and means and, at his recommendation, the Rev. Thomas Tuppen of Portsea was invited to become their new pastor. The chapel was opened on May 1, 1785, with a sermon by Mr. Tuppen. The records show that a church was organized on September 30, 1785, consisting of the pastor and sixteen members. Lady Glenorchy, in her last letter to Lady Maxwell, written from Bath, February 28, 1786, refers to the new place of worship for Dissenters. "There is a new meeting-house here, and an able gospel preacher in it, which is a great addition to our privileges."[1]

The church made some progress, but many of those who attended must have been adherents only. There are no grounds for the statement in The Life and Times of Selina Countess of

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[1]T. S. Jones, op. cit., p. 508.

Huntingdon that Argyle Chapel under the Rev. Thomas Tuppen grew rapidly from about twenty-five persons to seven or eight hundred.[1] For the official records of the chapel indicate that at the end of 1789 there were only twenty-nine members. However, this chapel soon became too small and a new site in Argyle Buildings was purchased for the erection of what is now Argyle Congregational Chapel.

Settlement at Bath

William Jay arrived in Bath to take up his duties as pastor of Argyle Chapel about one year after he had officiated at its opening. When he reached his new charge in September, 1790, he found the congregation very small. There were only thirty members, but they were united and desirous of accomplishing great things for God under the leadership of their new pastor. For the first time, William Jay had found the place where he felt he would really like to settle for life.

The first big event was his ordination service. This was held on January 30, 1791. On this occasion William Jay preached a memorable sermon from 1 Corinthians 15: 1 - 2, setting forth the claims of an evangelical ministry and stating his own confession of faith. In the sermon he gives glory to God, pays a fitting tribute to Cornelius Winter, who delivered the charge to the minister, and sets the pace for the life-long

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[1]By a Member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings, op. cit., II, p. 75.

ministry that followed. He was less than twenty-three years of age at this time.

> An early dedication to God made way for an early dedication to the work of the ministry. I cannot help tracing the hand of God in the whole of this affair. Born to no secular honour, possessed of no fortune, bred up in the shades of obscurity, I had not the least qualification for the work, or the least probability of being brought into it. But the Lord by providential circumstances opened the door, and I was placed under the care of my dear and honoured tutor, Mr. Winter, the best friend I ever had; to whose character I would bear my public testimony.[1]

His salary, when he settled, was fixed at one hundred and twenty pounds a year; but it remained at this figure for only five years, when it was raised to one hundred and thirty pounds. There was an immediate and marked increase in both the membership and interest of this church. The members provided themselves with a cemetery, since no Dissenter could be buried in any cemetery of the Establishment. In the Trustees' Book of Argyle Chapel may be seen the original deed, properly executed, dated September 29, 1791, leasing the property for one thousand years. This cemetery was enlarged in 1815. The chapel, which had been erected so recently, soon became too small to accommodate the large crowds which eagerly attended the ministry of William Jay. In 1793 the side galleries were built.

Argyle Chapel was an extremely active church. However, most of this activity may be traced to the energies of William Jay. For in addition to the two services on the Lord's Day, there were two other services during the week. On every Monday

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 75.

evening at the church he had what might be called "open house", when Mr. Jay sat down in an arm chair and talked with the people in a most informal and intimate manner, giving them fatherly advice on many matters pertaining to daily living as well as Christian growth. This meeting lasted for one hour and was well attended. On Thursday evening the pastor conducted his prayer service and Bible study. In 1798 The Sick Man's Friend Society was established at Argyle Chapel. The purpose of this organization was to visit the sick and to provide for the needs of the poor and neglected. The records of the church from time to time indicate that the offerings for all purposes increased rapidly. By the turn of the century William Jay was well on his way to success and even to fame.

His Courtship and Marriage

In the meantime, Mr. Jay had married; and his marriage was one of the many good things which may be attributed directly to that early visit to London and his preaching in Surrey Chapel. For when he left Marlborough Academy in July, 1788, the Reverend Cornelius Winter gave him a letter of introduction to the Rev. Edward Davies, first rector of Bengeworth, later of Coy-church. Shortly after this young minister reached London, he went to Mr. Davies' home and delivered the letter in person. There for the first time he met Anne, the minister's daughter, for whom he felt an immediate and powerful attraction. While he was preaching those eight weeks in London, he was often invited to the Davies'

home; and there were many other times when he called without an invitation. As soon as the youthful minister had finished his preaching assignment, he went to his work at Christian Malford and later to the Hotwells, Bristol. But all the while he kept in touch with Miss Davies. This young couple soon developed a deep and genuine love for each other. They wished to marry but when William Jay asked Mr. Davies for the hand of his daughter in marriage he was refused. The father thought it unwise for his daughter to marry a minister who, not being in the Establishment, did not have an assured income.

A short while before Mr. Jay's settlement at Bath, Mr. Davies obtained a dispensation for non-residence at his living and accepted the curacy of Batheaston, a pleasant village only two miles from Bath. Nothing could have so greatly helped the courtship than this unexpected nearness of the two residences. William Jay's popularity wasincreasing from week to week, and when he again asked the father for his daughter the permission was granted. The marriage took place at St. Peter's Church, Cornhill, on January 6, 1791, the Reverend Rowland Hill performing the ceremony. Thus began a union which was destined for much happiness and usefulness.

The Home at Percy Place

Of all the places that were dear to the heart of William Jay his home came first. Allow him to speak for himself on this subject.

> I pity no men more, -- and especially husbands and fathers -- than those who are regardless of home, who have no concern for it, who have no love for it, who have no desire to remain in it, or, when absent, to return to it, indeed who are always glad to get away. They are persons, I think, to be more deeply commiserated than others. I bless God, that I have not their tastes, their feelings, their habits. I have always valued and loved my home.[1]

It was in this spirit that William Jay and Anne Davies began their life together in their new home, and what was lacking in the one was supplied by the other. "Her special qualities were admirably suited to my defects. She had an extemporaneous readiness which never failed her, and an intuitive decisiveness which seemed to require no deliberation."[2] Mrs. Jay had the natural gift of being able to grace a home and to make of it a place of peace and cheerfulness. She spoke words of comfort to her husband when he was discouraged or perplexed and relieved him of many details so that he might be free to follow his high and noble calling.

The first child born into this home was a girl whom they called Anne for her mother. At an early age she married the Reverend R. Bolton, an Episcopal minister from the United States, and they had a large and happy family of thirteen children, three of whom became ministers. The second child was a son, William. When he had finished his schooling, he was apprenticed to a London architect and surveyor, with whom he continued for a while after he had completed his apprenticeship. He later went to

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[1]Thomas Wallace, A Portraiture of the Late Rev. William Jay (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1854), p. 70.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 92.

Georgia in the United States where he was employed with acceptance for several years and then he returned to England. After several attempts to succeed at home, he went out by appointment on government service to the Mauritius where at last he seemed to find himself. The third child, Arabella, married Garfit Ashton, Esquire, a solicitor of Cambridge. Cyrus Jay, the fourth child, settled in London as an attorney. The fifth was a son, Edward, who studied for the Ministry and preached with success for a while. But a certain fear and dread of having to appear before the public caused him to demit his life work and enter upon secular pursuits. The last member of the family was a daughter, Statira.

Life in this home at Percy Place was as happy and normal as it could possibly have been. William Jay knew the secret of dealing with his children. "Instead of making home repulsive, let it possess every attraction, and abound with every indulgence and allowance, the exclusions of Scripture do not forbid. Instead of making a child tremble and retreat; gain his confidence and love, and let him run into your arms."[1] William Jay had a deep and abiding love for his wife and children. Even though he greatly disliked letter writing, he had one day in the week which he called "epistolary day" on which he wrote to his children.

Mr. Jay was a great lover of the out-of-doors. His interest in the birds and flowers was more than that of a mere lay-

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[1]William Jay, The Christian Contemplated (6th ed.; London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1835), p. 74.

man; for he possessed a considerable degree of knowledge as a naturalist which he acquired through the years. On one occasion he prepared his sermon for Good Friday evening weeks ahead so that he might take his children out into the woods and fields on that day. He had a very deep love for nature and for people that remained with him throughout his long life. Shortly before he died, when he was on a visit to London, his son took him for the first time to see the Crystal Palace. Cyrus was extremely anxious to know what would impress him most. As they entered that magnificent place, his father's eyes filled with tears and he stood in awe and wonder. Finally he regained his composure.

> He viewed with much pleasure all that I pointed out to his observation; but that which produced the greatest impression on his mind were the strains of the organ, the building, and the mass of persons of all ranks congregated under the crystal roof. I endeavoured, but in vain, to get him to view the steam-engine which kept all the other machinery there in motion. He said: 'No; I could never understand the steam-engine, and I am certain I am not going to learn the mechanism of it in this magnificent structure at my time of life.' I found him, as ever, the true son of nature; for he was perpetually endeavouring to get back to the fountain, trees, and flowers.[1]

William Jay was very fond of fishing. He rarely visited his sister in his native village without trying his hand with rod and line. He also had a great love for music, but only as a listener. He did not know enough music to raise the tune for even one of Isaac Watts' most familiar hymns; and yet, he could tell the very instant another had made a mistake. Music stirred

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[1]Cyrus Jay, Recollections of the Rev. William Jay of Bath (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1859), p. 255.

him to the very depths of his soul. "I remember having once accompanied him to hear the oratorio of the 'Messiah', by Handel; and he was so deeply affected with various portions of it, that I thought I should have to lead him out of the cathedral. On returning home, he said that he should attend no more musical festivals, as the grandeur and beauty of an oratorio was [sic] too much for his nerves."[1] Music was always a great source of inspiration if not one of relaxation. Reading also gave him a great deal of pleasure; and he did much of it.

But gardening was by far his chief form of diversion. In fact, gardening was much more than a hobby with this minister; for he went at it in earnest. In the spring it was quite the usual thing to see Mr. Jay entering the woods some little distance from his home at five o'clock in the morning. He was going for tall, slender poles with which to stake his peas. It was an accepted fact that he grew the best peas of any one in the neighborhood. He also had a great love for flowers, and his garden was full of them. Though William Jay has been dead for almost one hundred years, his garden still shows some signs of its pristine glory. In it there is a transverse wall made of unusual rock formations which is most extraordinary. We have every reason to believe that William Jay rolled those stones in his own wheelbarrow and arranged them in this very attractive manner with his own hands.

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[1] Ibid., p. 140.

But there is another reason why he spent so much of his time in the garden. His constitution was none too strong. "Early in the morning Mr. Jay might be seen leaving the library to go into his garden for exercise . . . . He had all through life a very strong idea that a slight glow of perspiration was conducive to health, and produced cheerfulness of mind."[1]

William Jay was a man of temperate habits and well-ordered life. He was an early riser, seldom being in bed after five o'clock in the morning. But it was not because he could not sleep after that hour. It was rather because of a belief that early rising aided his health, coupled with a tremendous sense of responsibility which he as a minister felt for those under his care. He had breakfast at seven o'clock, dinner at one, tea at five, and supper at nine. He regularly retired at ten. William Jay not only did not use tobacco himself, but he even had an aversion for smoking. There were only two men who could smoke freely in his presence without being reprimanded -- John Newton and Robert Hall.

The big moment in this home occurred when the minister gathered his household about him -- family, visitors, and servants, for family worship. He believed in making this service short, interesting, and spiritual; and he thought that it should be conducted before the members of the family had become too tired or sleepy to enjoy and appreciate it. He considered this service absolutely vital to the life of every home.

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[1] Ibid., p. 138.

> If in the cold you denied your servants warmth; if you gave them bad food and short allowance; if you turned them out of doors as soon as they were sick, and they knew not where to lay their head -- the world would execrate you. If you were to suffer your children to go naked, to beg their bread, to perish with hunger in a ditch, or take your little ones and dash them against the stones -- you would be shunned as a monster. But you act a far more criminal and a far more infamous part, by disregarding their spiritual and everlasting welfare.[1]

Clouds and Darkness

The first sadness to enter this happy home occurred on August 31, 1820, when the youngest child, Statira, died of typhus fever in her nineteenth year. William Jay was on his way to preach at the opening of a chapel at Tavistock, Devonshire, when he first learned of his daughter's critical condition. He hurried home just in time to see her fade as a flower. We sense his deep sorrow in the following extract from a letter which he wrote at the time.

> . . . I only returned Wednesday evening -- just -- O how can I write it -- time enough to see my youngest daughter in the article of dying. My heart within me is desolate -- a lovely, accomplished, pious creature! You are a Parent! -- The mournful part I have mentioned will account for my not answering your letter earlier -- &[sic] apologize for my brevity now: for I am in no mood to write.[2]

The death of Statira prompted William Jay to write a simple but very beautiful poem which expresses his childlike faith in Almighty God, his resignation to His sovereign will, and a spirit

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[1] William Jay, Short Discourses To Be Read In Families (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1848), I, pp. 11 f.

[2] Rylands Eng. MS 370 (68) No. 2, (Being a letter fr. Rev. W. Jay to Rev. J. N. Goulty, written from Bath, September 5, 1820).

of triumphant optimism. This blow staggered the man of God but his faith enabled him to continue.

A short while after he had experienced this tragedy, another befell him when William died in the Mauritius. For some reason his son's death did not so greatly affect the father as did that of Statira. It may have been the distance from home and the long absence from his father's house which lessened the grief. Shortly before William's death, one of his three children died, in whose memory the book, Little Willy, was written.

A Citizen of Bath and of the World

William Jay's life was a good example of what a true citizen ought to be. He was very loyal to Bath, being immensely interested in her welfare. However, his efforts for the most part were felt indirectly; for he believed that he could best serve his city through the channels of the church. In this way he raised money for hospitals, for schools, for orphanages, and for charity in general. Always mindful of his own humble origin, he was truly a friend of the poor and needy. In later years when his fellow-countrymen were honoring him on the occasion of his Fiftieth Anniversary as pastor of Argyle Chapel, the mayor of the city, unable to be present himself, sent a letter stating that " . . . he considers the city of Bath to be more indebted to Mr. Jay than to any other individual with whom

he is acquainted."[1]

For well over a half century William Jay stood as a giant balance wheel amid the multifarious vicissitudes of life. He never allowed himself to become entangled in petty politics or any other matters unbecoming the dignity of his high office. "Mr. Jay, in politics, was a Whig of the old school, but in politics, as in religion, he generally took the liberal side, and never allowed difference of opinion on any subject to interfere with friendship."[2] Nothing more is said about his politics. His life, his preaching, and his many writings conveyed the one great idea that we owe our allegiance to Almighty God and to the temporal rulers as well. But the influence of this great man went far beyond the narrow limits of one city or of even one country. William Jay was most assuredly a citizen of the world and everywhere he went he effused a sane and wholesome attitude on all vital questions. Speaking at William Jay's Jubilee Celebration the Rev. J. G. Bedford, a clergyman of the Church of England, paid this high tribute to him: "Men of great and eminent usefulness are not the property of any section of the community: they are the property of the Church universal; they are the property of the human race; and, since such men's deeds live after them, they belong to men and to times which are to come after."[3]

William Jay was a successful man of affairs. He had

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[1]The Jubilee Memorial of the Rev. William Jay (Bath: C. A. Bartlett, 1841), pp. 110 f.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 132.

[3]The Jubilee Memorial of the Rev. William Jay, p. 117.

nothing at first; but by living modestly and spending wisely, he managed to own a home in one of the most desirable residential sections of the entire city. He appeared never to have had a financial worry. He was even a philanthropist in a small way, giving joyfully to many worthy causes. He often expressed the wish that he might have been a man of wealth, but only in order to be able to help poor but industrious young men just getting started in life. He gave his home at Tisbury, along with the spacious garden and orchard, to the Independent interests to be used as a chapel. He preached at his old home on the day on which it was opened as a chapel.

Mr. Jay touched life at its many points. He was very considerate of his own servants, and of those of the neighborhood, to whom he gave special religious instruction. This class for servants, which he conducted for many years, was one of his great joys. Of all the many beautiful and valuable gifts which he received during his lifetime, few were more highly appreciated than the modest gift which these servants gave to him. He was a friend to the man who delivered his milk and saw him almost every morning. He would lend him money when he was in need. He knew all the coachmen who regularly drove through Bath and was very fond of them. Quite often he would climb up on the driver's seat and sit with the driver on one of his long journeys. These men knew him and admired him greatly. He was a friend to all. He was not a man to harbor hate in his heart or to hold a grudge against anyone. His kindness often shamed those who were not very close to him by family or church ties. He was

instrumental in securing the release of a curate of the Church of England, who had been imprisoned at the Queen's Bench Prison for disturbing a meeting of Dissenters at Tisbury.[1]

His Middle Years at Bath

During this period the entire church flourished under Mr. Jay's wise and faithful leadership. In 1801 a Sunday School was organized at Argyle Chapel. The pastor's salary was increased to two hundred pounds a year. His broader influence was realized at this time; for in 1810 he received an unexpected honor from America. The College of New Jersey, now Princeton University, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. He appreciated this honor and acknowledged it but allowed himself to be called by this title only once. All that he would permit to be put on the brass name plate on the front door at Percy Place was simply William Jay. His church bore more than its part of the load in any great effort of the day. When a city-wide attempt was made to raise money for the Bath Infirmary and Dispensary, Argyle Chapel was one of the four highest contributors. It far outstripped even the Abbey Church.[2] The second and third enlargements of Argyle Chapel took place in 1821. "We hear that Argyle Chapel is to be opened for Divine Worship, by the Rev. William Jay, on Sunday morning next; when a

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 203 f.

[2]Bath Chronicle, July 5, 1810, LIII, No. 2524.

Collection will be made in aid of the expenses attending the recent enlargement. Service to commence at eleven o'clock."[1] The church was reopened on December 9, 1821, with a most appropriate sermon by the pastor from these words: "Be ye also enlarged."[2] Between 1800 and 1821 four hundred and ten members were added to the church roll. The pew rents and quarterly collections, which in 1800 had been two hundred and seventy-one pounds and five pence had increased until in 1821 they amounted to six hundred and forty pounds, nineteen shillings, and ten pence. The pastor's salary at this time was four hundred pounds a year, at which figure it remained until 1846. In 1829 the church voted the minister an annual gratuity of one hundred and five pounds. In 1836 the records show that to the original thirty members there had been added eight hundred and fifty three.[3] The erection of school rooms took place at Argyle Chapel in 1843, and a Day School was organized in response to a threat to put all early education under the supervision of the clergy of the Establishment.

The Strange Malady of Mrs. Jay

The year 1830 brought another great trial to William Jay. His faithful and devoted wife was seized suddenly with a very strange illness. Even though her health had not been good in

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[1] Ibid., December 6, 1821, LXIV, No. 3118.

[2] II Corinthians 6:13.

[3] William Tuck, op. cit., p. 23.

her youth, it, nevertheless, had been remarkable throughout her married life until this malady struck her. With no apparent warning, she suffered a very violent and painful attack causing her breathing to become very difficult and rendering her unconscious. Her husband looked upon her recovery as though she had been brought back from another world. A year later she suffered another similar attack, the effects of which left a partial paralysis and caused the manner of her expression to be affected. She would say the very opposite thing from what she intended to say. "Thus she spoke of a drop of bread and a thin bit of water; she called the black white, and the white black; the cold heat, and the heat cold; preaching was hearing, and hearing was preaching; in the morning she wished you good evening, and in the evening good morning." [1]

Mrs. Jay had with her a list which gave her the names of persons and things that she was most likely to need and this aided her to some extent. She continued to attend the services of the church regularly; however, it was very doubtful whether she really understood much of the service.

Mrs. Jay's condition put her husband under a terrific strain -- both physically and mentally. She had done so many things which he now had to do. Nothing has so endeared William Jay to those who knew him intimately as the tender and affectionate manner in which he cared for his invalid wife. Feebler and feebler she became from month to month. His attention increased with her gradual decline. He served her with more affection and

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[1] William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 100.

greater endearment the longer she lingered. With only one or two minor differences, it is another case similar to that which English literature has given us in Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In a letter which Mr. Jay wrote in October, 1841, to his daughter in America we sense his feelings.

> Your invaluable mother gets very feeble, and a short walk soon fatigues her, and she is no stranger to lowness, especially in thinking of death. This is, I believe, a frequent case with those who are best prepared for it. But she does not and cannot complain of any want of esteem, and love, and attention, even to devotedness, from all that are about her; and, with regard to myself, she seems to get dearer every day.[1]

This illness proved to be one of the anvils upon which the character of William Jay was forged. For with this trouble there appeared in him a tenderness, a sympathetic and understanding attitude, and a lustre which shone more brightly than before. There was a marked radiance about the man. He continued his work heroically.

The Fortieth Anniversary Celebration

This was a great event in the life of William Jay. All of the carefully laid plans of the committee were carried out in detail. The pastor was presented with a handsomely built carriage and a silver inkstand upon which the following words were beautifully inscribed:[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 221.

[2] I have examined a drawing of this carriage, which is to be found in the Archives of Argyle Chapel. It gives an appearance of dignity and elegance. It is olive drab trimmed in black; and the letters "W.J." are done in gold on doors.

> This Inkstand, together with a Landaulet, was presented by the Church and Congregation assembling in Argyle Chapel, to their beloved Pastor, in commemoration of Forty Years' faithful labour among them.
> Bath, January 30, 1831.[1]

But by far the greatest moment of the entire celebration occurred when William Jay stood in the pulpit and preached a most fitting, inspiring, and impressive sermon from these words: "Thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness."[2] The title he gave to the address was "The Retrospect". At the outset, he referred to an event which had taken place in the same building forty years before to the very day -- his own ordination. And then he rehearsed in a most interesting and dramatic manner the events of the past four decades. He spoke of the progress of science, and mentioned many of the advances which have been made in the world about. It was then with a note of optimism that he reviewed the gains made in religion. "Is it nothing that infidelity has been driven off the field -- that it is now only fighting in ambush -- that it is necessitated to betake itself only to objections which have been triumphantly answered a thousand times?"[3] He thanked the members and friends of the church for their many acts of kindness, implored their prayers for the future, pronounced the benediction, and the events of the day became history.

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[1]William Jay, op. cit., p. 185.

[2]Deut. 8:2.

[3]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 194.

His Coterie of Friends

William Jay had a wide circle of friends from all walks of life. It would be impossible to deal with all of them. To do so would but defeat the purpose of this brief section. Even though this particular portion cannot be exhaustive, I trust that it may be suggestive. I propose, therefore, to mention only a few representative persons, dear to the heart of William Jay, most of whom greatly influenced his life and thus aided in the great evangelical cause. A few have been chosen to indicate the scope of this man's friendship.

Were Mr. Jay and his friends living today and he desired to honor them with a great banquet, I know who would receive the first invitation. It would go to Cornelius Winter. The names Jay and Winter soon came to be most closely associated. When William Jay met the venerable John Wesley, the saintly man immediately thought of Mr. Winter, inquired about him, and then added: "Cornelius is an excellent man."[1] Cornelius Winter was the best friend that William Jay ever had and it was he, more than any other man, who took the talents of this poor boy and developed them, his energies and channeled them, his hopes and fanned them.

That second invitation would be sent to the Rev. John Newton. Mr. Jay met this man on his first visit to London, and it was Mr. Newton who took the initiative in the matter of getting acquainted. William Jay had an almost superhuman love and

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[1] Ibid., p. 412.

admiration for this one-time reprobate who prior to his conversion sailed the seven seas as captain of a slaver. Even though John Newton was a much older man and a member of the Church of England, he did not fail to thrill and inspire the younger minister as long as he lived. John Newton counseled and encouraged him when he was young and inexperienced. William Jay listened to him preach whenever the opportunity presented itself.[1] After Mr. Newton had died, William Jay passed his former church in London and this is what he said: "Ah, poor Newton, what a good man he was; and how often have I worshiped there, and heard him with profit and delight."[2]

The Rev. Rowland Hill was not silent in his admiration of William Jay; and this admiration was mutual. Mr. Hill was one of his close friends. This friendship began when William Jay first visited London and preached for him in Surrey Chapel, and lasted until the death of Mr. Hill, at which time William Jay preached his funeral sermon. This acquaintance opened many new avenues of service for the young minister and thus increased his usefulness in the evangelical cause. "With minds very differently constituted, and of altogether opposite habits, these two devoted ministers sustained a long friendship in the most perfect harmony, constrained towards each other by the common love of their Saviour."[3] It is very disappointing, however,

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[1]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1842), II, p. xi.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 258 f.

[3]Edwin Sidney, The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill (3d ed.; London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1835), pp. 353 f.

that the biographers of the Rev. Rowland Hill and William Wilberforce failed to deal properly with the long and friendly relations which Mr. Jay had with these men. No one felt that more than William Jay himself. "Very true; I felt the treatment somewhat keenly, but I shall set all that affair to rights; I am prepared to do justice to them and to myself."[1] This he did when he wrote the short memoirs of these two men.

There was a strong and abiding friendship existing between William Jay and William Wilberforce. The latter took up residence in Bath and the two spent a considerable amount of time together. Mr. Jay profited throughout his entire life by the wise counsels of this good man. He dedicated the Evening Exercises to him in 1831, and Mr. Wilberforce graciously accepted this honor. "It gives me unaffected pleasure to reflect that my name will thus be permanently associated with yours; and may this, my dear Sir, with all your other labours of love, be abundantly blessed."[2] At the invitation and encouragement of Mrs. Wilberforce, William Jay waited on this distinguished man during his last illness when even his intimate friends were not permitted to see him. In spite of the outward pressure that was brought to bear upon Mr. Wilberforce for his associating with Dissenters, and in spite of the casual and even unkind references to Mr. Jay which his high-church sons made in their biography of their distinguished father, it is true that this

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[1]Samuel S. Wilson, op. cit., p. 115.

[2]William Wilberforce, A Letter to the Rev. W. Jay, Written from Elmdon House, Dec. 30, 1831), as quoted in Jay's Autobiography, p. 310.

friendship lasted until the death of Mr. Wilberforce.[1]

The eminent and benign Mrs. Hannah More took up her residence on Pulteney Street in Bath and William Jay was often a welcome visitor in her home. Even though she was a member of the Establishment, she was for a while a frequent visitor at Argyle Chapel; and she was very fond of Mr. Jay and his preaching. She was severely rebuked for having communed at his church. She read her manuscripts of The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain and The Two Shoemakers first to him. Mrs. More was a daily reader of Mr. Jay's Morning Exercises and gave him many very helpful suggestions both as to composition and delivery of sermons. At her death she left a handsome legacy to this dissenting minister, thus proving her appreciation of him and his work.

One of the strangest friendships on record is that of William Jay and William Etty, the Royal Academician. That a noted artist, whose specialty it was to paint women in the nude, and a staunch Dissenter of the highest principles should have found common ground for a warm friendship is amazing. When the painter visited Bath, he spent an entire week at Percy Place with the Jays. It was during this visit that the celebrated artist painted a portrait of William Jay which Mr. Etty considered one of his greatest. He it was who after much observation caught Mr. Jay in his most natural pose -- right hand in his pants pocket and left arm on the arm of his chair. This paint-

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[1]R. E. Peach, Historic Houses (London: Simkin, Marshall, and Co., 1883), I, p. 19.

ing was copied and received wide circulation. This very unusual case is introduced to indicate the tremendous appeal of William Jay for all types and classes of men. The scope of this friendship ranged from the humblest servant to those in the highest rank of life.

In the same connection I mention another warm but short-lived friendship. Rammohun Roy, an Indian prince, was visiting in London.[1] The Lord Mayor invited Mr. Jay, along with others, to the Mansion House to meet and dine with him. In June 1832 William Jay preached in Surrey Chapel, London, and the rajah was present. He was so greatly impressed with the message that he asked Mr. Jay for a copy of it to print and distribute among his friends. This request was granted. The prince expressed his eagerness to hear " ... that truly evangelical minister in Bath,"[2] but his wish was never fulfilled as he died in Bristol the week before his intended visit to Bath.

It would not be right to bring this brief portion to a close without at least mentioning one other name, that of James Montgomery. William Jay knew this man and cherished his friendship very highly. He valued greatly his poetry, especially his hymns and lyrical selections. This admiration was mutual.[3]

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, pp. 449 ff.

[2]Ibid., p. 451.

[3]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 199.

His Broader Activities

Though William Jay spent by far the greater part of his life serving Argyle Chapel, Bath, he, nevertheless, engaged himself in many varied and useful activities elsewhere. His work at Surrey Chapel began in 1788 when he was only nineteen and continued for nearly fifty years. For thirty years he supplied this London church for eight weeks annually. Later it was for only six weeks each year. Then his duties at home became so heavy and the calls for his services at large so frequent that he had to limit his activities at Surrey Chapel to only four Sundays a year. Eventually it was only three, and finally he had to give it up altogether.

Any man who can preach five sermons before such an august and distinguished body as the London Missionary Society, and that over a period of fifty-five years, has achieved a feat which in itself is marvellous. This is an honor which, we believe, has been conferred on no other person. Standing before a vast audience on May 12, 1796, when only twenty-seven years of age, William Jay early manifested his evangelical passion as he preached from these words: "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory, Amen and Amen."[1] John Poynder, Esq., an eminent and wealthy layman, was won to the evangelical cause by that message.[2] Mr. Jay made his last appearance in

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[1]Psalm 72:19.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 446.

London, and knew it to be his last, when he preached before this same society in 1851.

During the entire course of his lengthy ministry, William Jay was especially interested in the distribution of the Scriptures not only in the British Isles, but throughout the world. To this end, he preached a sermon at Argyle Chapel once each year in support of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was also a favorite speaker in pressing the claims of this society, and upheld it when it was fiercely assailed on all sides.

> Frequently, however, did he preach on behalf of the Bible and the London Missionary Societies. Speaking of the former in the year 1832 -- a time when it encountered much opposition -- he said that he had watched its spirit and operations, had perused nearly all that had been urged against it, and found nothing that had, in his conviction, the weight of a feather compared with its pre-eminent excellence; and that he considered it upon the whole, and while it adhered to its original and fundamental laws and rules, as the noblest institution since the apostolic era.[1]

In 1798 Mr. Jay visited Ireland at the request of the Evangelical Society; but the Rebellion broke out, and he was allowed to preach but once outside of Dublin. At the turn of the century, he visited Scotland on behalf of the London Missionary Society, and preached in the following cities en route: Birmingham, Manchester, Halifax, Hull, and York. In Scotland he preached at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Paisley, and at other places, both in the Established Church and among the Separatists and Congregationalists.[2] William Jay was greatly in

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[1]William Dyer, op. cit., p. 10.

[2]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath, pp. 15 f.

demand as the preacher whenever a new chapel was opened. He preached at the opening of scores of them. His sterling character, forceful speech, and moral earnestness made him most effective as a man to raise money for worthy causes. In a letter which he wrote to the Rev. T. Haynes, declining the invitation to take part in an ordination service, he says this: "But this is not the only or principal ground of declension. Since the middle of August I have preached sixteen collection-Sermons; &[sic] the number of applications I have for extra services I cannot comply with . . ."[1] All of these activities were in addition to the duties of a very busy pastorate.

One Grand Occasion

Any man who can preach acceptably for fifty years from the same pulpit, when there are so many ways by which a congregation can conveniently get rid of him, deserves the highest praise. Since this is a distinction which comes to very few ministers, the members of Argyle Chapel laid out elaborate plans for the celebration of Mr. Jay's Jubilee. Friends in London, having read of these plans, expressed their eagerness to have a part in this memorable event. At a meeting held at the London Coffee House, November 6, 1840, they formally approved the resolutions passed by the committee at Bath, and agreed to help in

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[1]Rylands Eng. MS 379 (1070) No. 1 (Being a Letter which W. Jay wrote from Bath, January 29, 1836, to Rev. T. Haynes declining invitation to participate in ordination service).

this endeavor. Among other things, they resolved: "That this Meeting cordially approves the object of the foregoing Resolutions, and also desires to record its high admiration of the public and private worth of Mr. Jay, and to aid the Bath Committee in receiving contributions for the Testimonial referred to from friends residing in London, and at a distance from Bath."[1]

The events of this celebration covered two days. The religious commemoration of the Jubilee was held on Sunday, January 31, 1841. It began at seven o'clock in the morning when the members came crowding into Argyle Chapel for a service of prayer and thanksgiving for God's goodness and blessing. At nine o'clock a special service was held for the children of the Sunday School. But the grand moment of the celebration occurred at eleven o'clock when the venerable pastor preached the Jubilee sermon from these words: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"[2] Two other services were conducted that day by visiting ministers, the one at three in the afternoon and the other at six in the evening.

For the social celebration which began on Tuesday morning, February 2, 1841, at ten o'clock the magnificent Assembly Rooms of the city were used.[3] Breakfast was served to eight

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[1]Rylands Eng. MS 379 (1070) No. 4 (Being a complete account of meeting).

[2]I Thess. 2:19.

[3]These rooms were gutted by fire from an incendiary bomb during the bombardment of Bath, April 25 - 27, 1942, only a short while after they had been completely gone over at a cost of fifty thousand pounds.

hundred and twenty persons who were admitted by ticket only. Tickets were free to the ministers, of whom there were about sixty, to the Sunday School teachers, and to the poor of the church. After the breakfast a public meeting took place at which suitable testimony was borne to the worth of William Jay. Among the many wonderful tributes, none was better than the words of an old blind clergyman of the Establishment who spoke on behalf of the Church of England clergymen who were present for the occasion: "But I am here to testify that the Church of England is deeply indebted to the labours of Mr. Jay. I refer to the bright and steady light which has shone in this city for fifty years, and which began to shine in a time of gross and palpable darkness."[1] At this time Mr. Jay was presented with a solid silver salver and six hundred and fifty pounds by the friends and members of Argyle Chapel. He responded in a very appropriate manner.

The final part of the celebration took place on Tuesday evening at Argyle Chapel which had been filled to overflowing long before the service began. Two pillars of highly polished Scotch granite, each bearing a fitting inscription, were erected on either side of the pulpit -- the one to the memory of the Rev. Thomas Tuppen and the other to the Rev. William Jay. The date on Mr. Jay's pillar is January 30, 1841, the actual date of the anniversary. The young people of the church also presented Mr. Jay with a silver salver on which was resting a gold medallion;

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[1]The Jubilee Memorial, p. 114, (Taken from the address of the Reverend J. G. Bedford).

one side of which bore the likeness of William Jay and the other, Argyle Chapel. After the singing of the second of the two hymns which James Montgomery had written for the occasion, the benediction brought to a close this memorable celebration.

The Death of His Wife

Mr. Jay continued to preach with the same degree of success that he had experienced prior to his Jubilee. Great crowds flocked to hear him. All the while his wife grew worse and worse. "Mrs. Jay gets feebler yet is mercifully well considering her afflictions. Though getting on towards 74, I am able to make my four services per week, besides extra engagements; and our church flourishes and our congregation is large."[1]

The hardest blow that the venerable minister had to experience occurred when his wife passed away on October 14, 1845, in her seventy-ninth year. In a letter which he wrote a few days after her death, he paid a glowing tribute to her and made full acknowledgement of the debt he owed her.

> Hence, I must say nothing of her early piety, her consistent conduct, her Christian and lovely temper, her evangelical principles, her love to the Gospel, her intuitive readiness of perception, her warmth of friendship, her benevolence of disposition, her entire freedom from selfishness, her delight in doing good; and her patience, resignation, and cheerfulness under her peculiar and long-continued affliction.[2]

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[1]Rylands Eng. MS 860 (Being a Letter written from Bath by William Jay to Miss Harris at Caen, France, December 28,1842).

[2]William Jay, A Letter written from Bradford, October 24, 1845, to the Rev. G. Rogers, as quoted in Jay's Autobiography, p. 222.

After he had enjoyed such a union for fifty-four years, it is not at all surprising that Mr. Jay was never quite the same after his wife's death.

To the utter astonishment of his children, of his church, and of the Christian world, on September 2, 1846, at the Congregational Chapel at Worthing, William Jay married Miss Head, a pious lady possessing a considerable fortune at Bradford.[1] He was severely ridiculed in the London papers and elsewhere for this marriage. The papers played the matter up and depicted the marriage in such a light as to make it appear that William Jay had married a young bride and that for her fortune. Neither of these reports was true. Miss Head had been a good friend of the first Mrs. Jay and had often visited at Percy Place. But Mr. Jay was never truly happy with his second marriage and looked upon it, more or less, as a matter of companionship. Speaking to Cyrus the day before the wedding, he said: " . . . you must view the union, at her time of life and my own, to a certain extent, as a matter of companionship on both sides. You and my children are now removed at a distance from me, and my home is a place of desolation to me."[2]

His Later Years

The work was now becoming too heavy for Mr. Jay to do

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[1] Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 233 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 233.

alone. However, he had often expressed his opposition to having an assistant minister. He wanted assistance but not an assistant. When Mr. Jay asked for assistance in the work, the Deacons gladly consented. Various ministers were selected from week to week to preach at the evening service and thus lighten his load to some extent. However, this soon proved unsatisfactory; for it was very difficult to find capable ministers who were available to supply this pulpit. This practice soon brought hardship upon all concerned. In 1847 Mr. Jay suggested that they obtain permanent assistance in his labors. Bearing this in mind, they invited the Rev. R. A. Vaughn to preach for three months at Argyle Chapel. He preached in a most acceptable manner and at the end of his period of probation he was unanimously chosen as Mr. Jay's assistant. This young minister entered upon his duties in April, 1848, and continued to discharge them faithfully and effectively until March, 1850.

At this time Mr. Vaughn's father, Dr. Vaughn, the late president of Manchester College, wrote to Mr. Jay stating that he felt that it was time for his son to be given some sense of security. Unfortunately, the young minister had come to Argyle Chapel fully expecting to become co-pastor in a short while and eventually pastor. But this was not the understanding of either the Deacons or Mr. Jay. Rather than press this issue and thereby split the church and do a great injustice to the cause of Christ in general, Mr. Vaughn very graciously resigned and accepted work in Manchester. He was a good preacher and a perfect gentleman, with a winsome personality and many friends

and followers. On Good Friday morning, March 24, 1850, some two hundred of Mr. Vaughn's friends gathered at Sturgis' Studio, Kingston Buildings, Bath, to present him with a beautiful clock and a handsomely bound set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.[1]

If Mr. Jay could have been pleased with any assistant it would have been with Mr. Vaughn. But he had worked alone for so long a time that he feared to divide his duties and to share his authority with another. He had often said that if two people were to ride on horseback one would have to ride behind![2] But he later regretted very much this attitude which he had taken. "Subsequently he regretted the separation of Mr. Vaughn, and I heard him express, after his own resignation, how gratified he should have been if that young minister, whose talents he highly appreciated, had been his own successor."[3]

His Resignation

At the morning service on July 25, 1852, the aged pastor preached what proved to be his last sermon in Argyle Chapel. The next day he went to Worthing to enjoy his usual rest and relaxation. But after he had been there for several days he became alarmingly ill. Two of his children, Cyrus and Mrs.Ashton,

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[1]Unclassified MS copy of the proceedings of the farewell meeting held for the Rev. R. A. Vaughn. (This MS along with the Letter which Mr. Vaughn wrote to his father a few hours after he had resigned at Argyle Chapel and a MS copy of his farewell address may be seen in the Archives of Argyle Chapel at Bath).

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 260.

[3]Ibid., p. 261.

came to Worthing to be with him. While he was still quite ill, a letter came from the Deacons of Argyle Chapel intimating that for the good of the church it would be best for him to resign. On account of his condition, the members of his family thought it unwise to divulge to their father the contents of this letter. Their physician felt the same about this delicate matter. Mr. Jay had that very day talked with Cyrus about resigning and had said that he thought that he would do it. After some weeks he improved to such an extent that he was able to return to his home at Bath, where another of his daughters, had come to be with her father. It was while Mrs. Bolton was doing an errand in one of the Bath shops that the merchant, a member of Argyle Chapel, told her point blank that her father should resign. She went home and innocently told her father what had happened and immediately he burst into tears. Then it was that they told him about the letter which had come from the Deacons, and again he wept bitterly. He then called for pen and paper and wrote out his resignation, dated October 5, 1852, and effective January 30, 1853.

Unfortunate Developments

Among other ministers who were invited to preach at Argyle Chapel with a view to choosing a successor to Mr. Jay was the Rev. William Henry Dyer of West Bromwich, Staffordshire. Mr. Dyer spent a suitable season of probation and preached very satisfactorily. At the suggestion of Mr. Jay, the Rev. S. Luke

of London was also invited to preach for three weeks. He, too, preached very acceptably. Since these men were both so well received, it was thought unwise to invite them back again lest a division be caused in the congregation. A vote was taken and Mr. Dyer, having received a small majority, was invited to preach on probation for six weeks. But after he had preached only four weeks the members felt that he was not the man to succeed William Jay. Another meeting was held on March 16th, at which the feeling was very high. The excitement was heightened by the unfortunate appearance of the retired minister just after the meeting had begun. Mr. Jay addressed the assembly from the Deacon's pew, and said this: "'William Jay votes not against Mr. Dyer, but against his coming here'; for I am persuaded that it is our duty to prevent this taking place, only I hope it will be done by proper means, and by displaying a Christian spirit."[1] The vote was taken, and again Mr. Dyer received only a very small majority. His friends held a special meeting and urged him to accept the call. On March 18, 1853, Mr. Charles Clark, one of the deacons, sent a communication to Mr. Dyer, giving the exact state of affairs and advising very strongly against his coming to Bath.[2] But Mr. Dyer accepted the call, came to Bath, and a secession followed.

A group of one hundred and twenty, including some of the most influential and pious members, withdrew and formed a separ-

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[1] Bath and Cheltenham Gazette reporting meeting of March 16, 1853.

[2] A Letter from Charles Clark to Rev. W. H. Dyer, written from Bath on March 18, 1853, a copy of which may be seen in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

ate church. They were later joined by others. They had morn- and evening services in the Corridor Room on April 3, 1853.[1] Their numbers so increased that they moved to the Assembly Rooms, and later built Percy Chapel, which they named after Percy Place in honor of their former pastor. This was a very imposing church which seated a thousand people. The Rev. Richard Brindley was chosen as pastor of this new church. It was sad to see a church, which for more than half a century had been exemplary, suffer such a division.

The Death of William Jay

William Jay preached only a very few times after his retirement -- and these were at small country charges. His health was declining very rapidly. He spent these last months in writing, in meditating, or in having someone read to him. He often wanted to be alone. On the day before Christmas, 1853, the children were summoned to their father's bedside. He was very ill, and everyone knew that the end was near. Dr. Bowie, his faithful physician and friend of many years, was in constant attendance upon him. Mr. Jay was in great pain but calmly quoted his favorite passages of Scripture. On the day before he died, he expressed a longing for one last look at his garden. His children wrapped him very carefully, took him out of bed, and

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[1]From a broadsheet dealing with History of Percy Church, printed by C. Clark, Bath, 1854.

set him in an easy chair beside the window. Here he sat for an hour looking down upon the scene which had fascinated him for so many years. And then he said: "The prospect of my garden is now hid from my sight; I have nothing to do but retire to my bed and die."[1] William Jay passed away very peacefully on Tuesday evening, December 27, 1853, shortly after six o'clock.

> Thus closed the lengthened earthly career of this eminent servant of Christ, who, through the period of sixty-three years, faithfully discharged his ministerial commission, and diligently served his generation, in a city distinguished indeed by its fashion and gaiety, but yet not wholly insensible to the attractions of his eloquent and evangelic labours.[2]

The funeral was conducted at Percy Place on Tuesday, January 3, 1854, by the Rev. John Owen of the Vineyards Chapel. Burial was in the family vault at Snow Hill Cemetery. Tremendous crowds -- people of all ages -- fought their way through a blinding snow storm to pay a last tribute to one whom they loved and admired. Two days later, the Rev. John Angell James preached the funeral sermon at the Vineyards Chapel. Funeral sermons were also preached at Argyle Chapel on the following Lord's Day by the Rev. W. H. Dyer, and by the Rev. James Sherman of Surrey Chapel, London. The Rev. Richard Brindley also preached one to his congregation. A tablet was later erected to Mr. Jay's memory in Argyle Chapel.

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 320.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 245. Note by Editors.

Addendum to Chapter II

Two events have occurred recently which have a direct bearing on the foregoing. The church for which Mr. Jay labored so long a time is again a united church. At the suggestion of Percy Chapel, negotiations for union with Argyle Chapel were begun and a union was effected on November 9, 1947. "Once again after ninety-four years of separation, we are united in one Fellowship in our allegiance to Our Lord and Master, bound together in ties of common loyalty which we have faith to believe will be confirmed and strengthened in the years that are to be."[1]

The other matter has to do with the closing of Snow Hill Cemetery. The city of Bath received several devastating bombardments on the weekend of April 25, 1942.

> So it was on the evening of Saturday, April 25th, that the sirens sounded -- as they had sounded many times before. But on this occasion the city was the main target of the enemy spite and malice. A savage attack that started before midnight and was broken by a short lull was followed after a few hours' pause by a second attack which lasted until just before daybreak on Sunday; and these were succeeded an hour or so after midnight on Sunday by a raid, which, though it lasted only two hours, was even more deadly. Incendiaries and high explosive bombs of all calibres rained on the city. Planes roared down in dive-bombing attacks to as low as fifty feet, and then mercilessly fired on streets and buildings with cannon and machine-gun.[2]

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[1]Statement by H. D. Sleigh on behalf of Percy Church and recorded in the official Minute Book of Argyle Chapel by Dr. James F. Blackett, Secretary.

[2]C. Wimhurst, The Bombardment of Bath, (Bath: The Mendip Press, Ltd., 1942). The pages of this book are not numbered.

It was during these raids that bombs damaged or destroyed one thousand of the twenty thousand houses of the city. The rock wall of Snow Hill Cemetery was also heavily damaged. There immediately followed a great deal of trespassing and desecration. Temporary repairs to the wall proved inadequate. Since the cemetery had not been used for almost fifty years, it was in a very poor state of repair. This was also true of the small chapel and underlying vault in which the members of the Jay family had been buried. It was decided that in the best interests of all concerned this cemetery should be closed and converted into a park.[1]

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[1]Bath Chronicle, April 3, 1948.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM JAY THE PREACHER

WILLIAM JAY

By holy ministries in varied place --
    Now preaching in the house of holy prayer,
    Now writing for a multitude elsewhere,
He brought the living Christ to Faith's embrace --
The living Christ in fulness of his grace.
    He witnessed well in labour of his love,
    Anticipating here the life above;
Where now he sees the Saviour face to face.
Wise master-builder in Christ's Church was he,
    A scribe instructed in the heavenly lore;
Who for the blessing of God's family,
    Brought forth things new and old from Scripture's store,
Of truth divine that makes the sinner free,
    And breathes the life that lasts for evermore.[1]

December 10th, 1899.

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[1]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath, p. 41. This sonnet was composed almost a half century after the death of William Jay.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM JAY THE PREACHER

"For Such A Time As This"[1]

William Jay was raised up and endowed by Almighty God to meet a need and to fulfill a mission in just as true a sense as were the prophets of old. He was the man for the moment; he was the prophet for the age. "...we cannot for one moment resist the impression, ever uppermost in our thoughts, that he was, in an especial manner, selected, raised up, and set apart, by the Great Head of the Church, for the purpose of accomplishing one of those grand designs which form an epoch in the moral history of the world."[2]

He was by nature pre-eminently fitted for the work with certain God-given faculties which proved invaluable in the prosecution of the tasks that lay ahead. Few men have ever had so little of this world's goods and opportunities and yet so much of natural endowment -- physical, intellectual, and spiritual. William Jay possessed a commanding and striking appearance, and was an impressive figure to look upon. He was of medium height, stockily built, and broad shouldered. His well-shaped head was covered with a heavy shock of raven hair. His eyes were dark

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[1]Esther 4:14.

[2]Surrey Memorials, pp. 6f.

and piercing. As he spoke, his massive eyebrows were raised and his entire countenance was lit up. "His fine manly form in the pulpit always struck us at once, and his unique head, his deep-toned, sonorous voice, his natural, grave, impressive delivery, ever interested us."[1] Mr. Jay's voice was most unusual, and if you heard it only once, you never forgot it. "Much, no doubt, of the impression he makes is owing to his vocal powers, and his full management of their influence. The 'witcheries' of his voice is an expression that has often been applied to it."[2] We sense the unique character of his voice by the following incident.

> On one occasion, being about six miles from Bath, he hailed the coachman journeying to that city, asking him if he had room for him upon the box. 'We will make room there for you, sir, with pleasure,' was the reply. He had no more taken his place on the box, than a gentleman, who was seated behind the coachman, thus accosted him: 'Sir, if I do not mistake, you are Mr. Jay, of Bath.' 'I am, sir,' was the reply. Upon which the gentleman said: 'I have never heard you preach but once, since which time I have been in India for twenty years, and have just returned home. Your voice fascinated me; I recognize it again, and am happy to have met you. Do you still officiate at Argyle Chapel?' 'I do,' was the answer. 'Then,' said the gentleman, 'although I intended to have left Bath on Saturday for London, I shall postpone my departure until Monday, in order to have the pleasure of hearing you preach on the Sunday.'[3]

William Jay had strong intellectual powers. His was a phenominal memory. He had a wealth of poetry, prose, hymns, and Scripture at his command and could quote freely and at length. Even after he became an old man, he recalled very

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[1]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., p. 16.

[2]The European Magazine and London Review, January, 1819, p. 6.

[3]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 151 f.

vividly scenes and incidents of his early ministry. While on a visit to Teignmouth, Mr. Jay went to a chapel which he had opened almost a half century before. He began to inquire about all his old friends, calling each by name; and when he learned that they were all dead, he greatly lamented the fact. Then he gave the two texts from which he had preached when he opened the chapel many years before.

Coupled with this phenominal memory was a keen insight into human nature. William Jay was gifted with more than his share of good common sense, one of the preacher's most treasured blessings. He had a wonderful power to discern what was appropriate or inappropriate. He once entered the public library at Bath and one of his fellow-ministers, a man of the Establishment, suddenly cried out, "Brother Jay, that was a blessed, blessed meeting that we attended last night!"[1] The room was filled with ladies and gentlemen, admirals and generals, members of Parliament and other distinguished visitors. Mr. Jay was so embarrassed that he resolved never again to enter the library when that minister was present.

William Jay had an indomitable spirit. He was no quitter. Whatever he undertook, whether it was some difficult text or the more weighty problems of a lifetime in the Christian Ministry, he saw it through to a glorious finish. He had learned from his early training and rigorous discipline never to give up.

Thus intellectually gifted and physically endowed, what more reasonable than to expect that such a man was destined

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 26.

to some great special work? Accordingly we find that the sun of his usefulness arose at a portentous era of European history. It was 'a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.' In France, ages of oppressive exactions from the people, of ambitious and expensive wars, of unjust social preferences, of licentious indulgence, of cruel persecutions, and of abounding irreligion, -- these prolific sources of evil had at length generated a spirit of disloyalty and of skepticism which in its workings, open and secret, were directed, with the most persevering industry and the most unmitigated malignity, against many institutions, sacred as well as civil, by which society had been previously held together. The Gospel was universally discarded; reason was deified; and death proclaimed to be an eternal sleep. In the sequel, royalty was subverted; rivers of blood were shed; and ere long the influence of the Revolution was felt universally. The shock to the public mind here, as well as throughout Europe, was tremendous; and, in the apprehensions of the moment, every good man began to fear for the ark of God. At this ominous period, William Jay was seen among the foremost and the stoutest of the champions who battled valliantly for the Lord God of hosts. ... Reason was again seen as the handmaid of Revelation; and Christianity afresh proved to be the only safe guide for man in life, his only adequate support in death, and his only valid passport to immortality.[1]

A Child of the Evangelical Revival

William Jay's spiritual lineage may be traced directly to the Great Awakening. His is an unbroken line. George Whitefield died in 1770, when William Jay was but one year old. But it was Whitefield who was instrumental in winning Cornelius Winter to Christ; and it was Cornelius Winter who led William Jay to embrace the Christian Faith and then to enter the Ministry. "He was, if we may so express it, one of the many children of the great Gospel Revival of the last century, and it

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[1]Supplement to the Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, January 4, 1854.

was his privilege to become a faithful and powerful champion of its principles."[1]

Although Whitefield had long been dead, William Jay was very familiar with his life, beliefs, and achievements. He was in full sympathy with this great man and his efforts to carry the Gospel to those who were without Christ. Cornelius Winter was very closely associated with George Whitefield and it was through Mr. Winter that William Jay received his early and invaluable indoctrination into the great evangelical cause and its principles. The finest description of Whitefield that is in existence, according to Robert Southey, is to be found in The Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. Cornelius Winter, compiled and composed by William Jay.[2]

Mr. Jay was personally acquainted with the venerable John Wesley and his work, and admired him greatly. In one of his books he paid the following glowing tribute to the Wesleys: "They were a band of heralds, whose hearts the Lord had touched; and they flew like angels, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth. They roused the slumbering nation, called the attention to the truth as it is in Jesus, and commenced a revival of evangelical religion, from which Churchmen and Dissenters have derived advantages for which

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[1]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath, p. 32.

[2]Robert Southey, The Life of Wesley and Rise and Progress of Methodism, (3d ed.; London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846) I, p. xi.

they should not be ashamed to be thankful."[1] William Jay entered upon this work with a glorious spiritual heritage -- one which influenced his entire life, and of which he was justly proud. He inherited these great blessings and, being a true child of the evangelical family, he resolved to pass them on to the men and women of his generation. Greater than any of his natural gifts, physical or intellectual, was his spiritual endowment, the flaming heart which throbbed within his breast. He was truly a man with a message. He made a solemn resolve to cast his lot with the evangelicals and, by the help of God, to do all in his power to keep aglow the lights which had been lit by his distinguished forebears. We feel the serious tone of his life, the deep moral and spiritual earnestness of the man, in the words which follow: "'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth'[2] --- This brings the encouragement home to all. All cannot be Luthers, to reform countries; or Whitefields, to preach to thousands; or Careys, to translate the Scriptures into other tongues. But can we do nothing? Surely some one soul is thrown in our way to whom we may be useful -- a child -- a servant -- a relative -- a neighbor."[3]

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[1]William Jay, A Selection of Hymns As An Appendix to Dr. Watts' (Bath: George Wood, 1833), p. ix.

[2]Luke 15:10.

[3]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1842), I, p. 353.

The Village Preacher

William Jay began to preach before he was sixteen years of age.[1] Even at this early period of his life he possessed a discerning mind, and knew how to address in an appropriate way any group that he was called upon to face. To approach the timid rustic or the reserved villager in such a manner as to disarm him and get near his heart was one of the youth's strong characteristics. If he happened to be speaking to an audience composed of farmers, he would get their immediate attention by a casual reference to the weather or the bountiful harvest which they had had. "The minds of the rustics are not inaccessible, but you must take the trouble to find the avenues to them."[2]

This youthful preacher had an uncanny ability to select appropriate texts. Shortly after he had entered Marlborough Academy, he was sent out into one of the villages on Saturday afternoon, without any previous notice, to conduct service on the Lord's Day. Mr. Winter gave him the name and address of a well-to-do farmer with whom he was to stay. The lad knocked at the door, and when the servant came, he told her his mission and asked to speak with the man of the house. The servant could not believe her eyes, for she could not think of this poorly clad boy preaching. She called for her master and he was equally surprised -- even cold and disdainful. He was not accustomed to

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[1]Samuel S. Wilson, op. cit., p. 18.

[2]William Jay, Autobiography, p. 139.

have a beardless boy preaching for him! The servant took the lad into the kitchen, gave him a few crusts of cold bread, and then escorted him to the attic where he spent the night. In his humiliation, he began to prepare his sermon for the following day. Next morning, after a meager breakfast, he set out on foot for the village church. As he walked along the muddy road, the wealthy farmer passed him by in his surrey, driving two beautiful black horses. At the service, that boy stood in the pulpit and poured forth his soul from these words: "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes."[1] He showed how Christ did not disdain the lad's contribution, but even used it for the glory of God and the feeding of a vast multitude. The young preacher was complete master of the situation and preached a strong and searching sermon. It is needless to say that he rode back in that surrey and received the finest that the farmer had to offer.[2]

During the short period of his formal training William Jay often preached as many as three times on the Sabbath and once or twice during the week. Vast throngs came crowding to hear him, and he soon won for himself the distinctive title, "The Boy Preacher". He preached a thousand sermons before he was of age, and the effect was overwhelming.

His preaching was characterized by an authority and independence which strongly contrasted with his youth and

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[1]John 6:9.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 5 f.

> experience, and took the church and the world by surprise. There was no resisting the power of his appeal 'to the law and to the testimony'; and the comparative insignificance of the stripling was forgotten in the majesty of that appeal. In short, our preacher was an enigma even to his brethren. But a few short months before, a rustic of the humblest class -- devoted to toil -- with no resource beyond a cot -- he was suddenly seen to emerge from obscurity, to excite by his rising, and to dazzle by his effulgence![1]

What this youthful preacher lacked in the way of a classical or philosophical education he made up with his zeal for Christ. He had an evangelical passion. Into the worst possible conditions of village life -- amid the squalor, the poverty, the superstition, and often opposition, he went as a flaming messenger of the Cross. To those who doubtless would never have had the privilege of hearing the Gospel he preached, and many of them he won to Christ. "The state of the country then was very different from what it now is, as to an evangelical ministry. The real labourers were few. The spiritual condition of the villages was deplorable, and the people were perishing for lack of knowledge. No one cared for their souls."[2] The people were not educated; neither was the village preacher.[3] Yet he reminds us that he was able to stand before them and say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."[4] Village preaching was his greatest joy not

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[1]The Surrey Memorials, p. 4.

[2]William Jay, op. cit., p. 4.

[3]Ibid., p. 39.

[4]John 1:29.

only then, but throughout his long life.[1] Only God can measure the results, the hundreds who were brought to Christ by his efforts.

> I find a longing desire to preach again to the dear country people of Wiltshire. there[sic] I am in but now I seem out of my Element. They told me when I was coming to Town that like the rest of the ministers who went to London I should soon be drunk with popularity and forget and neglect them but I hope my conduct will prove the reverse.[2]

William Jay was first, last, and always the prophet of the poor, the friend of the friendless, and the representative of the downtrodden. He had a first-hand knowledge of the working man and a great love for the simple life of the country. With almost the poetic insight and sympathy of a Burns or a Goldsmith he describes this life for us. "Yonder comes the labourer. He has borne the burden and heat of the day: the descending sun has released him from his toil, and he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half-way down the lane, by the side of which stands his cottage, his children run to meet him; one he carries, and one he leads."[3] He felt a great satisfaction in championing the cause of the poor.

Mr. Jay's was the most popular pulpit in Bath. To Argyle Chapel came many of the most distinguished people on earth -- the poets, the teachers, the actors, the jurists, the

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[1]The special pulpit from which William Jay did this village preaching is still to be seen at Bath.

[2]William Jay, A letter to the Rev. Rowland Hill, postmarked July 88 but bearing the date of August 19 on Letter. Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, X, 41.

[3]William Jay, Sermons (Bath: S. Hazard, 1803) II, p.191.

clergymen, and men high in military and public life -- to worship Almighty God. William Jay spoke to more prominent people than most men of his day, but he delighted to preach the Gospel ad populum, as he said. When his Fiftieth Anniversary was being celebrated, he stood before a vast company of people to express his gratitude to them for their liberal gift of six hundred and fifty pounds. He thanked those who had given much, and then, after a pause and with much feeling, he continued, "I am willing to render to them the praise which is their due; but you will allow me to say, I have been much affected with the poor of my flock; and nothing will so long remain written on the fleshly table of my heart as the generosity of one individual who presented sixpence to one of my deacons, adding, 'I only wish it were a hundred pounds.'"[1]

Throughout his life William Jay used his pulpit, his pen, and his moral influence to help awaken a lethargical and disinterested nation to the crying needs of the poor and destitute. He was a social reformer and did much to raise the standards of this class. He believed and preached that salvation through faith in Christ is the central message of Christianity, but that the Gospel also has social implications. Listen to his words as he cried out from the pulpit on behalf of the needy.

> How many are there, who never touch a morsel of meat of their own, from one month to another; yea, whose homely board is frequently spread with the most common vegetables, unaccompanied not only with meat, but even bread and salt! ... My God! what a state of society is that in which, what

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 197 f.

> was originally pronounced as a curse, -- 'In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread, till thou return to the dust:' is prized and implored as a boon; and implored too in vain! O my countrymen, if your complaints reach not the ears of the great, they shall, by our prayers for you, enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.[1]

Mr. Jay also did much through his preaching and writing to raise the status of women, ~~and no doubt aided them in securing their suffprage~~.

The Preacher And His Methods

To William Jay the study was the most important room in his entire house. It was here that he spent the greater part of his life preparing his sermons, writing his books, receiving his friends and visitors, and entertaining his family when the day's work was finished. "And this room is a precious one to me. ... I never leave my study without regret; I am never so much at home as there."[2] The word industry characterizes very fittingly his life in the study. One great secret of Mr. Jay's achievement lies in his untiring efforts there. Early in his ministry he made a solemn resolution that he would be the most useful minister possible. He was determined to grow and improve. The motto by which he lived and labored gives us an insight into his success. "My motto has ever been, I will, by the help of

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[1]William Jay, Anxiety Directed; A Sermon Preached August 9, 1820, at Slater's Hall Before the Home Missionary Society (Bath: H. Gye, 1820), p. 36.

[2]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., p. 26.

God improve, I will not remain stationary. Hence I will read daily, have a subject always before me, and be seeking to get my mind enlarged."[1] In his study, therefore, he put forth the most unremitting effort, not only in his young days but throughout his life. Rarely was he seen without a book in his hand. Wise or foolish, he was in the Ministry for over thirty years before he took a single vacation. This diligent man was never satisfied with what he had accomplished already; he was ever pushing ahead! "A more genuine, persevering, unflagging student never existed."[2] He would agree most heartily with Sir Joshua Reynolds when he said, "If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate talents, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing can be obtained without it."[3] He realized his ambition as few have ever done; and his excellence came through diligence and industry. There was no obstacle too great, no effort too strenuous, and no sacrifice too costly for him in this the greatest work under heaven. Little wonder it is that he rose from absolute obscurity to an enviable place in the Christian world! "Having felt the value of the Gospel of Christ, his first wish was to proclaim it to others; in a word, to become a Preacher. ... and his resolution was to spare no

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[1]Thomas Wallace, A Portraiture of the Rev. William Jay, p. 76.

[2]Ibid., p. 75.

[3]Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses, ed., Helen Zimmern (London: Walter Scott, 1887), pp. 21 f.

trouble and no self-denial which might tend to make him what he wished to become."[1]

In addition to his great industry, William Jay had a remarkable gift for selecting texts -- a gift which, as we have seen, appeared early in life, and developed through the years. He faithfully and unceasingly studied his Bible and was equally at home in the Old Testament and the New. He kept his index finger on the pulse of the world; he was aware of its mighty heart-beat. When any great occasion arose -- any time for national rejoicing or mourning -- he was ready. He had the very text, and was never greater than on these occasions. What could have been more fitting than to preach at the opening of a chapel from these words: "A door was opened in heaven."[2] When Lord Nelson fell mortally wounded at the battle of Trafalgar, Mr. Jay preached a very stirring message from these words: "The victory that day was turned into mourning."[3] He pointed out that Nelson's flag ship was the Victory, and that though the battle had been won, there was mourning by all from the cabin boy to the captain. The mourning spread from this ship to the entire fleet and presently throughout every village and city of the Empire, until the tears of King and people were mingled.

This great preacher often startled his audience by using a very strange and unfamiliar text and then handling it with

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[1]Francis Cunningham, "Review of William Jay's Autobiography", Christian Observer, June 1855, p. 397.

[2]Revelation 4:1.

[3]II Samuel 19:2.

such skill that the words lived. He has been criticised for selecting texts that are not only strange and unfamiliar, but even quaint. He believed that in his preaching a minister should cover the entire keyboard of revealed truth and not preach from his own choice texts or pet ideas alone.

> My view, then, my dear Sir, is, that the selection of texts should involve the whole range of revealed truth; and should present it in that combined form in which the Scripture exhibits it; where doctrine, duty, and privilege, blend like the colours that form the pure brightness of light; where religion is never exposed to view, as a bare skeleton, but as endued with all the properties of life, and in actual existence.[1]

William Jay excelled also in interpreting Scripture. This he did very accurately, interestingly, suggestively. He always insisted upon the exact meaning of the text, and heartily disliked anyone to read a false meaning into it. "But they are bad interpreters of the Scripture, who give it meanings which it never had. ... They may alter and they may add, but it would be better for them to have nothing to do with these finished paintings, or to present them as they are left by the hand of the matchless master."[2]

This minister was not a slave to any system; nor was he bound by any method. His homiletical eye was open all the time. He discovered sermon possibilities while he was roving through the fields and woods or digging in his garden. But most of them came to him while he was at work in the study, or

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[1]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1842), I, pp. xvi f.

[2]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1843), VII, pp. 127 f.

during family prayers and private devotions. He read much and rapidly, but he had no well-organized method of filing the fruits of his labors. This he later regretted very much. He kept a notebook near at hand in which he wrote the texts and sermon ideas as they came to him.

Once he had found the text, he set out immediately to make a complete and detailed outline of the sermon. Here again he was a master. His outlines unfolded naturally and showed great clarity, accuracy, and movement. It was not his usual practice to write out a sermon in full until he was preparing it for publication. He did this occasionally in the first part of his ministry, but he never liked the plan. He felt that it deprived his message of freshness, freedom, vigor, and of the inspiration and enthusiasm of the moment. "He is accustomed only to write the outlines of his sermons, and to leave, after much meditation, the filling up to the extempore energy of the moment, and to the unstudied feeling of the instant delivery."[1] Mr. Jay made it his practice never to enter the pulpit without great preparation. He looked upon the task of preaching to a large audience as a great talent which had been entrusted to him; and he was concerned to use it to the greatest advantage by application and prayer. Hence, when he rose to speak, his mind was literally filled to overflowing with his subject.

> This man's mind is no petty reservoir supplied him by laborious pumpings -- it is a clear, transparent spring,

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[1]The European Magazine and London Review (London: Joyce Gold, 1819), January, 1819, p. 6.

> flowing so freely as to impress the idea of its being inexhaustible. In many of these pages the stream of eloquence is so full, so rapid, that we are fairly borne down and laid prostrate at the feet of the preacher, whose arguments in these moments appear as if they could not be controverted, and we must yield to them. The voice which calls us to look into ourselves, and prepare for judgment is too piercing, too powerful, to be resisted; and we attempt, for worldly and sensual considerations, to shut our ears in vain.[1]

And so the preacher was always ready for the audience, and there was always an audience waiting for him when he appeared.

William Jay was strictly a biblical preacher. Although he usually had a theme or topic, he preached from a text. His divisions stood out clearly in his preaching. In fact, some of his critics thought they were too prominent. He made good use of illustrations, which he drew from life, nature, history, and literature, and drove home an idea so that it would be remembered.

Mr. Jay abhorred the custom of reading sermons, which was so prevalent in his day, and said that the Ministry was the only profession which would permit such a practice. He was even prejudiced against a minister's using notes. By so doing, he lost eye contact with the audience and rendered the sermon far less effective. Mr. Jay had what the great Gladstone later possessed, "a falcon's eye with strange imperious flash",[2] and believed that if one is to move his hearers he must keep his eyes upon them. In writing to a fellow-minister about a young

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[1]William Beckford, as a tribute to William Jay, and quoted in The Autobiography of William Jay, pp. 24 f.

[2]John Morley, Life of Gladstone (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1903) I, p.191.

man who failed to receive a call to the church which many felt certain he would have gotten, Mr. Jay said this: "It is said he reads all his Sermons -- this alone wd[sic]prejudice many against him."[1] Only in his last years did William Jay use notes. He preached from certain catch words, but later regretted even this, saying, "The memory is like a true friend, it loves to be trusted."[2]

William Jay attached the greatest possible significance to simplicity of style. He felt that it was useless to preach unless the people understood what he was saying. He succeeded in developing a style which was appealing to persons of all ranks of life. "But what, then, was the style of that preaching? Its features were simplicity without affection --familiarity without impertinence -- sincerity without guile -- determination without obstinacy -- power without despotism."[3] His language was pure English throughout, and devoid of foreign idioms. Mr. Jay hated flowery speech or any attempt at purple patch preaching. "But as we advance towards maturity of taste we shall relish the natural more than the artificial, and not only distinguish between finery and elegance, but perceive that

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[1]Rylands Eng. MS 370 (68) No. 1 (Being a letter from William Jay to Samuel Nichols at Wymondley Academy, Hertshire, dated from Bath, 27 May, 1818).

[2]William Jay in a letter from the Rev. Dr. Johns, Rector of Christ Church, Baltimore, Md., to Rev. R. Bolton, as quoted in the Autobiography, p. 227.

[3]Surrey Memorials, p. 8.

the one is destructive of the other."[1] He became a master in the use of the English language. His discourses were simple and clear enough for the most unlearned person, so logical and convincing as to satisfy the most brilliant lawyer, sincere and moving enough to disarm the most bitter critic. He used concrete and not abstract language. It was picturesque, graphic, and even poetic at times. We notice this in the following: "There are thorns in the nest that pierce through the down that lines it, but are known and felt only by the occupier."[2] The mind of William Jay was marked by great originality and his style was one all his own. He imitated no one; and no other preacher was quite like ~~ever imitated~~ him.[3] He was often criticised because his language was said to be lacking in refinement, elegance, and profundity. But we must bear in mind that his one purpose was to win men to Christ -- that he had given himself over wholly and unreservedly to the desire to be used of God. He did not want a studied and stilted phraseology. He preached for results and he achieved them. The same criticism has been made of George Whitefield; but his desire to be useful far outweighed this deficiency. Listen to the words of the historian, who, after stating that Mr. Whitefield's sentences were not always well balanced or his language as elegant as it might have been, pays this unusual tribute.

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 121.

[2]William Jay, Morning Exercises (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1829), I, pp. 86 f.

[3]John Dix, Pen Pictures of Popular Preachers, p. 34.

> But the man himself gave to every word which he uttered a character which no other man could give. Baptized by the Spirit of God; his whole heart yearning for the recovery of lost souls as a mother yearns for the return of a prodigal son; alive, from intense experience, both to the horrors of sin and the delights of holiness, he pleaded his Saviour's cause with a love for Him and those with whom he pleaded, which made him seem, for a time, like one possessed.[1]

William Jay's simple and natural style was one of his greatest assets, and " ... may not inaptly be said to reflect the character of his genius."[2] It is worthy of the careful consideration and study of all who desire to get at the true secret of his popularity and success as a minister. "Preaching as lucid in statement, as clear in arrangement, as persuasive in manner, would be as powerful today as it was when Jay was in the zenith of his popularity and influence."[3]

Every person, whether minister or layman, who visited Mr. Jay's study and talked with him at any length was greatly impressed with his knowledge of men and books. His long life and desire to learn permitted him to hear and know most of the great men of his day, both ministers and men in public life. He was equally at home discussing religious, literary, or general subjects. "Thus endowed, he was enabled to levy contributions alike on the kingdoms of nature and of art; and to seize on what, whether at home or abroad, in the house or field, he

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[1]Herbert S. Skeats, A History of the Free Churches of England (2d ed.; London: Arthur Miall, 1869) pp. 383 f.

[2]The Surrey Memorials, p. 8.

[3]The Congregational Review, January, 1890, p. 15.

was ever seeking and looking for; namely, objects with which to illustrate things divine."[1] William Jay's knowledge was well rounded. By his industry he became a student of history and frequently alluded to historical events. He referred often to the Church Fathers, or to Virgil, Cicero, or Homer. Mr. Jay was familiar with the writings of the leaders of the Reformation. Even after he began to preach, he learned French so that he might read Saurin,[2] the great French preacher, in the original. This study proved most interesting and helpful, and opened up to him a vast new field of French divines, both Catholic and Protestant. He also read the sermons of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon in their own tongue,[3] and enjoyed reading the sermons of the French Huguenot preachers.

When it came to commentators, he believed Thomas Scott[4] to be the best expositor for the connected meaning of Scripture and for general references. But for his own spiritual uplift he found nothing comparable to Matthew Henry. Mr. Jay was fond of the writings of the early Puritans and Nonconformists, and he carefully studied the sermons of his contemporaries in an honest effort to better himself as a preacher. Isaac Watts was his

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[1]Supplement to Bath and Cheltenham Gazette (2d ed.; Wednesday, January 4, 1854).

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 561. Jacques Saurin (1677 - 1730).

[3]Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627 - 1704), Louis Bourdaloue (1632 - 1704), Jean Baptiste Massillon (1663 - 1742).

[4]Thomas Scott, The Holy Bible Containing The Old and New Testaments, in Six Volumes, ed., William Symington (A New Edition, Glasgow: Mackenzie, White, and Co., 1842).

favorite poet and hymn writer to whom he delighted to refer as the poet of the sanctuary. Second to him was the great evangelical poet, William Cowper. Mr. Jay was familiar with the writings of all the leading ministers of his day on both sides of the Atlantic. He regularly read the best religious magazines, and was a contributor to many of them.

> One of the most eminent of our living ministers remarked to us lately, 'I never thought Mr. Jay so truly great a man, as I did, after having conversed with him on many literary and intellectual themes, in his beautiful study at Percy Place. I found in entering into spirited discourse with him, that he was acquainted with almost every subject, and that his views were expressed with all the fulness and force of a Johnsonian mind.'[1]

In the catalogue of Mr. Jay's library, which was printed after his death when his library was being sold, are listed many carefully selected books covering a wide range of subjects.[2] If there were no other record, his library itself would bear mute testimony to its owner's industry, versatility, and achievement.

Mr. Jay was a deeply spiritual man; and unless we can see him upon his knees we shall never fully understand him or know the source of his great power. His sermons, prayers, devotional exercises, poems, and hymns all reveal the important fact that he was a man of prayer. This was one of his greatest and most frequent themes. He would agree heartily with Kierkegaard that prayer is the Archimedian Principle.[3] It was his practice

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[1]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., p. 116.

[2]This catalogue may be seen at the Bath Municipal Library.

[3]Soren Kierkegaard, Journals of Soren Kierkegaard, ed., and trans., Alexander Dru (Oxford University Press, 1938), Original Text: IX - A - 115; Journal Entry 784, p. 249.

always to go straight from his knees, from talking with God, into the pulpit. He would not speak with anyone until after the service. Little wonder it is that he spoke with authority, and that men eagerly pressed in to hear him, for he had a message from God!

The Preacher And His Message

As the saintly John Newton lay on his deathbed, William Jay called to pay his respects to one whom he so greatly loved and admired. In a voice that was low and feeble Mr. Newton said to his visitor, "My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great Saviour."[1] In this brief statement from the lips of a dying man, we have a summary of William Jay's message and his attitude toward the things of God. Everything that this servant of Christ said, whether as the youth in his teens or as the aged prophet with his hoary hair, revolved about these two great facts. He looked upon himself as a sinner. At eighty-four years of age, he preached his last sermon from these words: "Behold, I am vile."[2] He ever looked to Christ for forgiveness and pointed men to Him. How like the testimony of Charles Simeon, that saint of Cambridge!

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[1]Josiah Bull, John Newton of Olney and St. Mary Woolnoth - An Autobiography and Narrative (2d ed.; London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), p. 358.

[2]Job 40:4.

> 'There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold -- the one is my own vileness, and the other is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and I have always thought that they should be viewed together.'[1]

William Jay rediscovered the Gospel. Ministers of the Establishment, for the most part, had grown cold, indifferent, philosophical, and even lazy in their preaching. But along came this preacher with his message of redemption -- one in which Jesus Christ was held up in all his fulness, love, and power -- and for his hearers the Gospel suddenly came alive. It was not a message on moral philosophy but on the redeeming love of Christ. William Jay shunned anything philosophical or speculative, saying, "When metaphysics walks into the pulpit, Jesus Christ walks out!"[2] Men flocked to hear a message so simple and yet so dynamic, so inclusive and yet so personal. "He remarked to us at the outset of his ministerial labour, 'Let your ministry be full of Christ. I find that such preaching is sure to tell, sure to do good.'"[3] This was no new message, but an old one preached in a new light and with new zeal. It was not that William Jay was a pioneer in this respect. It was rather that he had the courage to hoist again sails which had long lain wrinkled and moulded in the dust, and the winds of God's love blew on them and filled them. He preached the whole counsel of God. No matter what his subject was, he always got

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[1]William M. Sinclair, Leaders of Thought in the English Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), p. 203.

[2]William Jay, as quoted by Samuel S. Wilson in The Rev. William Jay: A Memoir, p. 83.

[3]Wallace, op. cit., p. 104.

around to the message of the Cross. "Alexander Whyte, describing his Saturday walks and talks with Marcus Dodds, declared: 'Whatever we started off with in our conversation, we soon made across country, somehow, to Jesus of Nazareth, to His death, and His resurrection, and His indwelling.'"[1] Such was the case with William Jay. Christ was the center of his life, the inspiration of his thoughts, and the model of his conduct. It is quite natural, then, that his messages should be full of Christ. How could they be otherwise?

On one of his early visits to London Mr. Jay inquired about the leading ministers of that great city, and how they would be classified as preachers. He was informed that the first one was a doctrinal preacher; the second was described as practical, and the third as experiential. William Jay then resolved that he would endeavor to combine the merits of all three of these types. Hence his messages were "evangelical in doctrine, practical in operation, lively in experience, and noble in effects."[2]

Few persons, apart from the Great Preacher Himself and His apostles, have attached more significance and value to the soul than did Mr. Jay. His unfaltering belief in the infinite worth of the soul of even the most degraded slave is one of the forces which ever prompted him to press forward. He never failed to thrust this idea into the forefront, no matter what group

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[1]James S. Stewart, Heralds of God (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1946), p. 61.

[2]William Jay, op. cit., p. 173.

he was addressing. Listen to the preacher as he speaks for himself on this subject "Do we lay too much stress upon this circumstance? -- The salvation of a soul, the soul of a poor slave, is an event of far greater importance than the deliverance of a nation from civil bondage."[1]

The one purpose of all his sermons was to win men to Christ. He looked upon the world lying in darkness; but he narrowed it and thought also of the neighbor, friend, or brother in need of the Gospel.

> The end of preaching should always be regarded to win souls to Christ. We must not be party-men. There is, however, a good deal of this. One wants to make his hearers Churchmen; another Baptists; another Independents; another Wesleyans: should it not be the object of one and all to make them Christians? the followers of the Lord Jesus? When I preach, I want to preach Christ. When I invite the sinner, I wish to invite him to Christ.[2]

To this task, then, of winning to Christ those living in darkness, he devoted himself at the very beginning of his ministry. In his use of words he did not bother too much about elegance and refinement. He felt personally responsible for souls entrusted to his care or within his reach. Is not this the task with which every true messenger of Christ is faced? "For us as ministers, ambassadors of God, everything must subserve the higher end of usefulness, in making us more accurate thinkers, trained men, preachers and teachers of influence and power."[3] It is

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[1]William Jay, Short Discourses To Be Read in Families (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1848), I, p. 423.

[2]Wallace, op. cit., pp. 136 f.

[3]James Black, The Mystery of Preaching (2d ed.; London: James Clarke and Co., Ltd., 1924), p. 14.

one thing to teach the merits of Christianity; it is quite a different thing so to set forth Jesus Christ that men will lay hold of Him and resolve to live by Him. This Mr. Jay faithfully endeavored to do for over sixty years. In lecturing to the students at Yale, Phillips Brooks summed it up very forcefully in this brief statement: "It is good to be a Herschel who describes the sun; but it is better to be a Prometheus who brings the sun's fire to the earth."[1] It is remarkable to consider the extent to which this Independent minister was enabled, by the help of God, to realize this strong purpose.

> But his greatest recommendation is not that he has been one of the most popular preachers of the age or country, but that he has consecrated all his abilities, and all his labours, and all his influence, to usefulness: and that it has not been without effect, the numbers who have been brought under the power of vital religion by his fixed and occasional ministrations testify.[2]

The full weight and effectiveness of his message were felt by people of all ages and stations in life, both within and without the Christian Church. He made strong and effective appeals to the youth of the land. Rarely did Mr. Jay close such a service without pressing for a personal decision for Christ. He always stressed the value of home training and addressed some of his most searching discourses to parents. Once after having discussed with them the wonderful manner in which they provided for the temporal and material needs of their

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[1]Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching Delivered Before the Divinity School of Yale College (Manchester: James Robinson, 1899), p. 21.

[2]The European Magazine and London Review, January, 1819, p. 2.

children, he hurled this challenge at them. "What is the body to the soul? What is time to eternity? What is it to dispose of them advantageously in life, and leave them unprepared for death, unprovided for a new, a never-ending, period of existence? Are you the barbarous instruments of bringing these hapless beings into life, only to sacrifice them?"[1] He called upon all to make their religion count for God, and that, seven days a week. The Christian life, as he conceived it, is a ceaseless warfare which we are to wage throughout our earthly days. There can be no letting up or withdrawing. "In conversion we throw away the scabbard; in death only we lay down the sword."[2]

What another has said about the sincerity of George Whitefield is equally true of William Jay. "Much of his power was due to the fact that he was absolutely sincere."[3] Religion with him was not only a matter of the intellect and will, but it was also a matter of the heart and feelings. He believed with Thomas Chalmers that "Moonlight preaching ripens no harvest!"[4] There was a great urgency in all Mr. Jay's preaching. On the occasion of his Fortieth Anniversary at Argyle Chapel, he closed the service without giving the call for a personal decision for Christ. Fearing lest someone should go away and never have

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[1]William Jay, Twenty Four Sermons Preached At Argyle Chapel (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1844), IX, p. 133.

[2]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1842), III, pp. 16 f.

[3]W. B. Selbie, Nonconformity -- Its Origin And Progress London: William and Norgate, n.d.), p. 180.

[4]Thomas Chalmers, as quoted by Adam Philip in Thomas Chalmers (London: James Clarke and Co., Ltd., 1929), p. 118.

another opportunity, Mr. Jay extended the invitation even after he had pronounced the benediction.

"The Prince of Preachers"[1]

Many have gone so far as to say that William Jay could be truly characterized by a single expression -- The Preacher. And when they so describe the man, it is not that they would for one moment minimize his other achievements, but rather emphasize the fact that it was in this capacity that he excelled. "It was as a preacher that Mr. Jay was pre-eminent."[2] The pulpit was his stronghold. It was not as a platform speaker or lecturer that he shone, but as a preacher. He was never so much at home as when he was in the pulpit at Argyle Chapel pouring out his soul to a vast audience of eager listeners. "In short, the chair of the church was his forte, and hard study for that, his very high commendation."[3] The amazing part of it all is the faithfulness with which this distinguished minister discharged his duties from week to week. "And one thing we can never forget, namely, as regularly as the chapel clock struck the hour of eleven in the morning, and six in the evening, Mr. Jay was seen

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[1]John Foster, a tribute paid to the Rev. William Jay, as quoted in Dictionary of National Biography, ed., Sidney Lee (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1892), p. 256.

[2]The Baptist Magazine (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1854) XLVI, p. 677.

[3]Samuel S. Wilson, op. cit., p. 27.

either ascending the stairs of his pulpit, or entering it."[1] There is one picture of him which will be long remembered. It was his last appearance before a London audience; and he was addressing the London Missionary Society in the huge and crowded Surrey Chapel. When he stood before that vast assembly and delivered a message with his characteristic note of triumphant optimism, it was almost as if one of the ancient Hebrew prophets were speaking.

> As he ascended the pulpit, and presented his venerable silvery head to the congregation, I could hardly contain my feelings. My mind rushed back to the long period of sixty-three years, when he, a ruddy-faced and interesting youth of nineteen years of age, there presented himself for the first time to a London audience, and gained a popularity which he maintained to the day of his death. But time had failed to diminish the lustre of his eye, the melody of his voice, the style of his delivery, and the able handling of the text. At the commencement, and during the delivery of his discourse, he was at times very sensibly affected; he having determined that this would be, what it really was, his last address to a London audience.[2]

It is impossible to say too much about the pulpit eloquence of William Jay. None other than Richard Brinsley Sheridan termed Mr. Jay "the most natural orator whom he had ever heard."[3] This quality of the preacher was one of his marked assets. He was devoid of anything that savored of affectation. The words seemed to roll from his lips and he never wanted for the exact expression for the desired moment. Mr. Jay here made a very definite and positive contribution. He transformed the

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[1]Wallace, op. cit., p. 17.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 252 f.

[3]Dictionary of National Biography, ed., Sidney Lee (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1892) XXIX, p. 256.

prevailing type of oratory and lent a certain warmth and charm to the spoken word. "His mind was constituted for a special purpose -- for the purpose of re-modeling the whole system of pulpit oratory -- and to originate, so to speak, a new order of ministerial character."[1] Those who heard Mr. Jay preach were deeply impressed with both the content of his message and the manner of its delivery. Lord Brougham even confessed that he had never before known the "nature of true eloquence, and that, in fact, he had never before formed the slightest idea of its matchless capabilities."[2]

Mr. Jay had a very distinguished audience. We have dealt at length with the fact that he found great delight in ministering to the poor. But we would do an injustice to him if we failed to mention that he also ministered to the great and mighty of the earth. Few preachers have ever attracted so many eminent personages from such varied fields of labor. His logical and masculine mind was very appealing to men of the legal profession and there were always many lawyers in his audience. The same was true of physicians and surgeons. Mr. Jay's messages were also most stimulating and inspiring to ministers, as was evidenced by the scores of them who came to hear him. Clergymen of the Establishment joined the Nonconformist ministers in hearing this great preacher. The celebrated actor, Cooper, was a frequent visitor to Argyle Chapel. He taught elocution to the clergy of the Established Church and looked upon William Jay

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[1] The Surrey Memorials, p. 14.

[2] Ibid., pp. 27 f.

as a model of what a preacher ought to be. Lord Godolphin was in Bath attending his wife who was ill. In talking with Mr Ashton, William Jay's son-in-law, he said "But, do you know, Mr. Ashton, I consider Bath is now so very dull a city, that if it had not been for Mr. Jay's preaching, I could not have remained so long in it."[1] When Charles Young, the great tragedian, was in Bath, he would sometimes go to hear William Jay. We learn his estimate of Mr. Jay's preaching by the conversation which follows. "'We have had an admirable sermon this morning,' to which we readily assented. 'Mr. Jay', he continued, 'wears well. I have heard him occasionally for more than thirty years.'"[2] Sir William Knighton, Physician to King George IV, and Keeper of the Privy Purse, was a staunch Episcopalian. He attended a service at the Abbey Church on Saturday, June 15, 1833. He found the church very comfortable and beautiful, but was horrified to see in attendance only fifteen or twenty persons, most of whom were cripples. But it was an entirely different story the following day when he joined the eager throngs who crowded into Argyle Chapel to hear William Jay. "Sunday, 16th -- We hailed this morning with great pleasure, because we had the satisfactory prospect of again hearing Mr. J--; and we were not disappointed."[3]

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 173.

[2]Wallace, op. cit., p. 37.

[3]Lady D. Knighton, Memoirs of Sir William Knighton, Bart., G.C.H. Keeper of the Privy Purse During the Reign of His Majesty King George the Fourth (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), II, p. 328.

These names and professions are mentioned for one purpose only -- to show that William Jay had a strong following among those of the highest intellectual and social standing throughout the British Isles. What was true in Bath was even truer in London, where he preached to his largest audiences and perhaps did his greatest work.

One of the criticisms aimed at Independents in general was that they had a very low conception of the Ministry and the Church; but this was not true of Mr. Jay. If ever a man magnified his office, it was this minister. He looked upon preaching the Gospel as the greatest work under heaven. Who has ever before put it in this way? "I would rather be a preacher of the Gospel than the archangel who shall blow the trump at the last day."[1] Few men have ever depicted the Ministry in a more glorious light than did William Jay.

> They rejoice, not at the foundation of a museum, but of a sanctuary; and, if they foreknow things, exult not at the birth of a Wellington, but of a Whitefield.
>
> For let us appeal to the DESIGN of the institution. It has been remarked, that the office of a lawyer is important, because it watches over our property; and the office of a physician much more so, because it guards our health ... But even these are nothing to the soul and eternity; the soul and eternity alone are absolutely great; yet to THESE our office is appropriated, and by these it is infinitely dignified.[2]

Mr. Jay never took his work lightly. Many were drawn to Christ simply by his serious attitude toward his mission and message. To listen to him speak you would think that you were listening

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[1] Supplement to Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, Wednesday, January 4, 1854.

[2] William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 171.

to a Whitefield, a Spurgeon, or a Moody. "Preaching the Gospel is a very solemn thing; indeed nothing can be more deeply solemn. I feel its awfulness. To stand between the living and the dead, to call men to repentance, to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God ... I can see nothing more truly serious and awe-inspiring than our work."[1]

All that Mr. Jay achieved in pulpit excellence came through much prayer and great effort. Preaching was not as easy for him as it would appear to the casual observer. For he confessed that as he ascended the stairs into the pulpit and thought of the many distinguished people whom he was soon to address, he was at times almost overwhelmed with a feeling of apprehension and anxiety; but he always found God's grace sufficient.[2]

William Jay was a very magnanimous person. There was nothing little, narrow, or jealous about him. A clergyman of the Establishment in praising him said that he never spoke an unkind word against the Church of England.[3] He was always charitable in dealing with his fellowmen. He displayed an ecumenical spirit almost unknown in his day. Those who knew him best described him as "a man of catholic mind and heart, clear in conception, vigorous in utterance, possessing a commanding and

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[1]Wallace, op. cit., pp. 131 f.

[2]Ibid., p. 131.

[3]Jay's Jubilee Memorial, p. 116.

impressive elocution; and giving himself heart and soul to his work, especially to the pulpit."[1]

William Jay has made a decided and distinct contribution to the Christian pulpit. He helped to bring about the right conception of the majesty of God and glory of the Gospel. He gave to the pulpit a new dignity and worth, raising it in the eyes of his fellow-ministers and of the world. By precept and example he brought to the Ministry a greater authority, influence, and independence. He was absolutely fearless in his preaching, and aroused the clergy, both young and old, to greater zeal and endeavor. He set before them a suitable model for evangelical preaching. He gave to the Ministry a certain charm and challenge, and by his example so inspired young men that many of them accepted its challenge. He exerted on the preaching of his day a vitalizing influence which can hardly be measured by human standards.

The Heart of a Shepherd

William Jay had a very lofty conception of the pastoral office. He held the relation between pastor and people to be a sacred bond never to be taken lightly. He felt that no minister should enter upon it without careful regard to the will of God, a pleasing hope of being mutually helpful, and an overwhelming concern for the souls of those committed to his care. This

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[1] The Illustrated Magazine of Art, No. 59, Vol. II, February 11, 1854, as found in the Hunt Collection at Bath Municipal Library.

relationship he regarded not as a natural, but as a spiritual one.

Nevertheless, we are very much disappointed with the manner in which Mr. Jay discharged his duties in this sphere. We have kept him exposed constantly to the brilliant searchlights and have made many valuable, as well as interesting, discoveries. We have noticed numerous things in which this man excelled. Nor is it our purpose here to dim the lights and thus hide a glaring weakness of this minister. One of the strongest criticisms hurled at him is that he was not the pastor that he might have been or could have been. He did not visit his flock with any degree of faithfulness or regularity. Early in his ministry he felt that he had to decide whether he was to be a bell ringer or a preacher; whether he would spend his time holding interviews and attending endless social functions, or be a servant of Christ proclaiming from the pulpit the way of life. Mr. Jay believed that to visit properly a large congregation would require his entire time, giving him no opportunity for study. Then on the Sabbath, what could one expect but that "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed?"[1] He thought that no man could, at the same time, be great as both preacher and pastor. "It seems now hardly possible to combine equally in the same man the excellences of the pastor and the eminence of the preacher."[2] He chose to be the preacher and remained somewhat aloof from his

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[1]John Milton, "Lycidas", The Poetical Works of John Milton (The "Albion" Edition, London: Frederick Warne and Co., n.d.), p. 72.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, pp. 154 f.

people. He did not visit them in their homes or places of business as they would have wished him to do and as he should have done. He felt that too much intimacy caused a loss of reverence and respect.

But it is to be said in his favor, as we have seen, that he did have a very informal gathering in his church each Monday evening to which large numbers regularly came. He sat before them in an arm chair and gave them fatherly advice and admonition on matters pertaining to daily life as well as religion. He advocated the use of laymen and induced the officers and men of his church to visit and do other things. He even recommended the use of women to aid in such matters. Much of Mr. Jay's time was consumed in writing his books or preparing for the four services which he conducted each week throughout most of his life. He had frequent engagements elsewhere in the interests of the Kingdom at large. He also visited many of the sick who resorted to Bath for healing and who were without the services of a minister. All of these things were good, but they consumed much time. I feel that Mr. Jay's ministry would have been even more effective if he had visited systematically the members of his congregation and had known them more intimately. However, he was on hand with the ministry of mercy and comfort where there was any real need -- where critical illness, distress, or death were to be found.

His Fame as a Preacher

William Jay was far-famed as a preacher. Quite naturally, his influence was felt first and strongest in England and in his own denomination. But it did not stop with his own country and church. The name of this preacher was soon known and revered throughout the British Isles, in far off India, Australia, America, and wherever the English language was spoken. In his messages young ministers found a source of inspiration and the aged found consolation. His influence was far-reaching. "Few have won more converts to the Gospel; have preached to larger audiences; have suggested more thoughts to other preachers."[1] In the spring of 1852 the Rev. Dr. Henry Johns, Rector of Christ Church, Baltimore, Maryland, United States of America, paid a visit to this country and spent much time going about hearing the distinguished preachers of the British Isles. When he returned to America and was asked who was the greatest preacher he had heard during the entire trip, he would invariably reply, "The old preacher at Bath!"[2]

One of the most remarkable features about Mr. Jay's popularity is that it did not wane. It lasted almost until the day of his death. "There is seen no diminution of interest in

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[1]Francis Cunningham, "Review of Jay's Autobiography", Christian Observer, June, 1855, p. 401.

[2]Henry V. D. Johns, In a letter to the Rev. R. Bolton in which he describes his visit to William Jay at Bath, as quoted in the Autobiography of Jay, p. 229.

his unrivalled discourses -- on the contrary, there is exhibited an increased attachment to his person and ministry. From the commencement, as we have said, the preacher commanded the attention of those of rank and station and removed them above the ordinary sphere of mortal existence."[1]

Toward the end of his life Mr. Jay was in London with his son, enjoying the many interesting sights in the magnificent Crystal Palace, when suddenly he saw the Duke of Wellington standing in the crowd. Being always fascinated with people, Mr. Jay turned aside so that he might have the opportunity of seeing this distinguished person closely. As he was standing there admiring that great figure so prominent in English history, a gray-haired mechanic, spotting the venerable preacher in the throng of people, came up to Cyrus and said, "Sir, I would rather be William Jay than the Duke of Wellington."[2]

It must have been quite a temptation for this eminent minister to become affected by all this praise, merited though it was. But he seems never to have been phased in the least by the many honors and commendations which came his way. At the Jubilee Celebration of his ministry at Bath, the chairman, Henry Godwin, paid a beautiful tribute to him.

> I am old enough, my friends, to have witnessed a great deal of the popularity of Mr. Jay: and, of all the trials and temptations he has had, perhaps that has been the greatest. I have seen him a young man, launched, like a vessel laden with divine truth, upon the troublous, treacherous ocean of popularity: he has kept his steady course;

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[1] The Surrey Memorials, p. 29

[2] Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 256.

> the flag aloft has been the union of faith, hope, and charity; Christ has been at the helm, and the glory of God has been his polar star; the Bible has been his compass; the sweet breath of heaven, humble prayer, has filled the well-spread sails, and carried him onward. But he has had the gales of trouble, and the billows of sorrow, which have risen against him: and many a frail bark which attended him has been shivered upon the rocks, or wrecked upon the shoals. By the grace of God he has kept his steady course; he has gone onward and onward towards the fair haven of eternal rest.[1]

When we think of the vast numbers whose lives have been touched and influenced either directly or indirectly by William Jay -- those who have been won to Christ, others who have been fitted for life's battles, the many who have been inspired to greater heights, and those who have received comfort in their hour of trial through his ministry -- we rejoice in such a life and pray that hundreds may be persuaded to follow his noble example.

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[1] Jay's Jubilee Memorial, p. 93.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM JAY THE AUTHOR

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The Nature Of His Writings

Outstanding as Mr. Jay was as one of the foremost preachers of his day, his contribution to the evangelical cause as an author was equally great, if not greater. For the tremendous influence which emanated from his pulpit was preserved, multiplied, and extended through his numerous writings. Instead of his having been a sage for one city, or at most for one nation, and that for only a lifetime, he became a prophet for an age and one whose influence has extended to many parts of this world and is felt even today. Although William Jay has been dead for nearly a hundred years, he still lives and speaks through what he has written and left behind. How fortunate it is for posterity that he found the time, inclination, and energy to record the innermost thoughts of his mind and heart! Mr. Jay himself had little doubt that his work as an author would far surpass his efforts for service along all other lines.[1]

He did not begin to write until he was well established as a preacher. It was only after he had reached his thirty-sixth year and had been preaching for two decades that he began

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 356.

to write in earnest. Judging from the reputation and distribution of his works, one would be likely to suppose that William Jay appeared as a writer much earlier than he did. "Not until he found himself established -- had reached nearly the meridian of life, and felt himself competent to command his work -- did he venture to divert, in any measure, his attention from the pulpit to the press."[1]

Most of his writing was done at one of his favorite watering places where in his later years he always spent his vacations. The many pressing duties of the Ministry made it impossible for him to reserve adequate time to do much writing except that required for his four weekly preparations. This opportunity he found when he was vacationing. Mr. Jay had very definite ideas as to how and where he should spend his time on such occasions. He wanted a place which was removed from the noise and rush of life -- one where he could withdraw from the world. But the sequestered spot had to offer more than mere retirement. It had to be one of such rare natural beauty that it animated and inspired him. Sidmouth, Lynmouth, Linton, and the Isle of Wight proved most restful and inspiring.[2] Lynmouth was his best-loved watering place and there for several successive years he spent as happy a month as any on earth. But Worthing was his most frequently visited vacation spot. It was not only a secluded and beautiful place, but was situated advantageously

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[1]Dyer, op. cit., p. 9.

[2]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, IV, pp. vii ff.

in reference to both Cambridge and London, so that Mr. Jay could be near his children. For the last twenty years of his life, he was in the habit of spending six weeks at Worthing during the months of July and August.[1] It was at these places that he did most of the writing, revising, and preparing of his manuscripts for the press.

Mr. Jay's conception of a vacation was quite different from that of most people. He felt that true relaxation could be perfectly enjoyed only in connection with work. He also believed that time was too precious a gift to be spent in idleness. Therefore he endeavored to use every hour to good advantage and to gather up the remaining moments that even they be not squandered.

> Relaxation indeed can have no existence separate from employment, for what is there to relax from? On the other hand, action prepares for repose; and labour not only sweetens but justifies recreation -- so that we feel it to be not only innocent indulgence, but a kind of recompense.[2]

And so, while resting from his pulpit duties, Mr. Jay was producing some of his most valuable works.

It is not at all difficult to classify his various writings. Most of them are written on religious themes, and the few books, articles, and sketches which are not strictly of that nature have, nevertheless, a religious vein running through them. They have aided the evangelical cause indirectly and immensely. Everything that he has written falls quite naturally into one of

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[1]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 184.

[2]William Jay, op. cit., p. xi.

the following categories: sermons, devotional literature, biographical sketches, articles, hymns, and poems.

The first thing that he ever wrote for publication was a letter recommending Scott's Commentary[1] in compliance with the author's request. Mr. Jay's letter appeared on the cover of the first published numbers. It is quite strange that Mr. Scott, who was a Churchman, should have made such a request of an Independent minister. It indicates the fact that William Jay's early influence and tremendous popularity as a preacher were being felt at that moment and were preparing the way for his career as a writer.

The first of his sermons to appear in print was the one which he preached at the dedication of Argyle Chapel on October 4, 1789. It was most appropriate, and was from these words: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."[2] This sermon made an immediate and tremendous impression and, at the request of the hearers, was published.

We shall not deal with Mr. Jay's works chronologically, but in groups according to their nature, beginning with the sermons.

In 1801 he published a separate discourse bearing the title Mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives. The sermon was

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[1]Thomas Scott, op. cit.

[2]John 4:23,24.

occasioned by the forthcoming marriage of a young couple, the bride-to-be having lived for some months in the Jay home. The author conceived the idea of dealing with the various duties devolving upon husband and wife in a sermon preached before the entire congregation, the young couple being present. On this particular occasion he gave a discourse which was destined for general use and interest. It proved to be one of his most popular messages, and quickly passed through six editions.

In 1802 and the following year he published two volumes of sermons. They met with a success which far surpassed the author's expectations, and in a very short while were published in five large editions.[1] This encouraged him greatly, and marked the turning point in his career as an author. His writings having been so well accepted, Mr Jay launched out upon this course with some measure of assurance. These two volumes of sermons were published in 1844, almost forty years later, in one large volume under the title Twenty Four Sermons Preached at Argyle Chapel, and were dedicated to the church and congregation worshipping there.[2] In 1837 Mr. Jay visited Cambridge, and delivered a series of five sermons which impressed his audience greatly. These were published there, and at that time.[3] During the period from 1842 to 1848 Mr. Jay collected and revised

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[1]William Jay, Twenty Four Sermons Preached at Argyle Chapel (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1844), p. ix.

[2]This is volume IX of his collected works.

[3]William Jay, Sermons Preached at Cambridge (Cambridge, J. Hall, 1837).

his works and brought out a complete edition in twelve large volumes. He published around forty sermons separately. However, the author reminds us that some of these earliest sermons do not appear in his collected works, as he did not deem them suitable for publication. Ninety-three have been published in the various issues of The Pulpit.

It was very common for a reporter to worship at Argyle Chapel, take down a sermon in shorthand, and publish it in one of the newspapers or magazines long before Mr. Jay had any intention of putting it into print. This annoyed him very much, and he looked upon it as stealing.

In 1843 he published a volume of occasional sermons, each of which had previously appeared separately. These he had preached on great occasions throughout his long ministry.[1] They appeared under the title Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, and are on subjects of general interest and lasting importance.[2] In 1854 another volume of sermons, Final Discourses at Argyle Chapel, was published.[3]

William Jay wrote much which may be classified as devotional literature. In 1805 he sent forth in two volumes his

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[1]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1843), pp. vii f.

[2]This is volume VII of the author's collected works.

[3]William Jay, Final Discourses at Argyle Chapel, ed., T. J. Wren (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1854). This volume appeared after the author's death. For this reason T.J. Wren is listed as the editor.

Short Discourses To Be Read In Families.[1] They are made up of one hundred and three separate discourses, carefully selected and skillfully treated.

It was this work that earned for the author the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.[2] These books had a large sale and were greatly appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic. They went through six large editions very quickly. These Discourses later appeared in three volumes, and in 1848 in two.[3]

> His Short Discourses for Families, with some exceptions as to taste, are what may be almost styled perfect in their kind. So clear are they in conception, so comprehensive in their range of thought, so terse in language, so simple in style, so full of life and vigour, that it is scarcely possible to read them without feeling that you are sitting at the feet of 'a Master in Israel.'[4]

In 1820 Mr. Jay published a book of prayers to be used by the heads of households in the conduct of family worship. It has this unusual title, The Domestic Minister's Assistant; or Prayers For The Use Of Families. "The 'Domestic' minister intends, not the pastor or preacher, not the servant of the Most High God, who officially shows unto men the way of salvation -- but, he who adopts the resolution of Joshua -- As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."[5] This book contains prayers,

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[1]William Jay, Short Discourses To Be Read In Families (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1848).

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 107. This degree was conferred by the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University.

[3]These are volumes XI and XII in Mr.Jay's collected works.

[4]Francis Cunningham,"Review of William Jay's Autobiography," Christian Observer, June 1855, p. 397.

[5]William Jay, The Domestic Minister's Assistant; or Prayers For The Use Of Families(11th ed.;London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1829), p. iii.

both morning and evening, for six weeks. In addition to these there are to be found morning and evening prayers for all of the great days of the Christian year. There are others for times of sorrow and fasting and of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Then follows a brief section in which we find petitions for particular occasions -- for a youth going on a journey, for one who is sick, for those in prison, and for a servant who has come into the family. Finally, there are prayers for the various seasons, for a bountiful harvest, and for peace. The beauty and value of this book lie in the warm and realistic manner in which the soul cries out to God. The Lord is addressed in the most reverent way. "We desire, O God, with the profoundest reverence to contemplate the eternity of thy nature. May our minds be filled with elevation and grandeur at the thought of a Being with whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years one day."[1] As one reads these prayers, he is not aware that he is following a certain prescribed form or litany. On the contrary, he feels as if he might have crept up on some prophet or saint unaware and heard him communing with his Maker. These prayers are so free, so flowing, and so fervent. The writer's evangelical outlook is very marked in them. "O, prepare us for that solemn day. May we believe Him as a Saviour, before we meet Him as a judge; that when the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him, we may lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh."[2] It is not at all surprising that the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 355 f.

[2] Ibid., p. 349.

demand for this book was very great and that it soon passed through sixteen editions.[1]

In 1826 the author delivered in Argyle Chapel a series of lectures entitled The Christian Contemplated in a Course of Lectures. In them he very graphically depicts the various stages of a Christian as he journeys through life. The writer quite naturally begins with The Christian In Christ. He then shows us the same man In the Closet, In the Family, In the Church, In the World, In Prosperity, In Adversity, In His Spiritual Sorrows, In His Spiritual Joys, In Death, In the Grave, and In Heaven. Mr. Jay later published a thirteenth lecture as a kind of complement and application of the whole from these words: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."[2] His design was very practical. He wished to furnish light on many perplexing questions which were constantly arising in the minds and hearts of God's people. In the lengthy preface of this book he gives many valuable hints on preaching. This has been characterized as the most poetical of all Mr. Jay's practical works and is reckoned by many as his best.[3] It is certainly one of his most helpful books. It reached its eighth edition shortly after it was offered to the public. A bishop of the Church of England was so pleased with it that he recommended to all of his candidates for holy orders that they purchase it for their use.[4]

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[1]The Domestic Minister's Assistant constitutes volume X in William Jay's collected works.

[2]Acts 26:28.

[3]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 362.

[4]Ibid., p. 362.

But the work which really won its way into the hearts of men and women was his Morning Exercises In The Closet For Every Day In The Year. The idea for writing this book came to Mr.Jay in this way. It was during one of his visits to London that he was introduced to the rector of Plymouth, Dr. Hawker. The latter was the author of a book of devotions known as the Daily Bread. Mr. Jay approved very highly of the idea of such a book, but he did not like this one because of the high Calvinistic creed of its author.[1] He went home fully determined to write a similar one himself. His devotional book of Morning Exercises appeared in two volumes and was an immediate success, passing through eleven editions. In 1831, two years later, he wrote the sequel to the Morning Exercises, Evening Exercises For The Closet For Every Day In The Year. It, too, was published in two volumes and the work bore the portrait of William Wilberforce to whom it was dedicated. These were also well received. Mr. Jay later combined the Morning Exercises with the Evening Exercises and published them in four large volumes as Morning and Evening Exercises.[2] This is the form in which these devotional classics received their greatest popularity.

> We have no doubt that both the Morning and Evening Exercises will become more and more a kind of text book for the Christian's closet, and that generations yet unborn will

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[1] Ibid., p. 339.

[2] William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises (London: C. A. Bartlett, 1842). These four volumes constitute the first four of William Jay's collected works.

> admire the fertility of the mind, as well as the piety of the heart, which originated them.[1]

Mr. Jay also wrote biographical sketches, both religious and secular. His last work, Lectures on Female Scripture Characters, was published in 1854.[2] When the final page of this volume was passing through the press, the aged author was summoned to his eternal rest. The book is made up of a series of twenty-two lectures on female characters, from both the Old and New Testaments. The selection is not intended to be complete or exhaustive, but rather suggestive and representative. These lectures were given by Mr. Jay forty-eight years before. They were occasioned by his desire to express in some impersonal manner the debt which we owe to womanhood, and the tremendous influence which women exert in the home, the church, and the world. The characters are portrayed in a very warm, fresh, and interesting manner. The author devotes four of his twenty-two lectures to the Woman of Samaria and three to the Shunamite. It is surprising that he should have dealt at such length with these two characters and thus have had to limit his selection. One of these lectures has appeared in another of his works,[3] but this is the only one which is to be found in the collected works.

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[1]W. B. Sprague, "The Character and Works of The Rev. William Jay" as published in The Quarterly Christian Spectator (New Haven, Conn., U.S.A., Baldwin and Ellis, 1833) March, 1833, p. 8.

[2]William Jay, Lectures on Female Scripture Characters (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1854), p. xiii.

[3]Lecture XXI, "Martha and Mary", is found as Discourse XLI in Short Discourses For the Use of Families, I, pp. 481 ff.

In his younger days Mr. Jay prepared five lectures on the Virgin Mary, but he did not write them out in full. Hence, after a lapse of almost half a century, when he again took up his lectures, he was unable to complete them. So they were gone, and he regretted it very greatly. "I lament this, as I had thought much on the subject; and had wished to steer between the idolatries of the Romish Church and the excessive fears of some Protestants, which have betrayed them into a degree of the opposite extreme."[1]

In 1808 William Jay published Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. Cornelius Winter. This volume has been fondly referred to as "the book of his youth, and the book of his heart,"[2] for it memorializes the friend he so tenderly loved. He delighted in writing this memoir more than any other he ever wrote.

> But I have laboured with pleasure, and rejoice in the enterprise, from a persuasion that what I have written from the warmest affection, and the highest regard will at the same time be ratified by a large proportion of the public voice; and that I am doing good to others while I have an opportunity to indulge my own feelings, and to acknowledge the obligation to my dear and honoured friend and benefactor, which I shall never be able to discharge. To him I owe all my respectability in life, and my opportunities of public usefulness. Though not a child by birth, I have been one by adoption.[3]

The first part of this book is made up of a series of letters written by Mr. Winter in which he gives his own account of his

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[1]William Jay, Lectures on Female Scripture Characters, p. xi.

[2]Supplement to Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, January 4, 1854.

[3]William Jay, Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Rev. Cornelius Winter (2d ed.; London: Williams and Smith, 1809), p. xiv.

life and activities. Mr. Jay edited these; and where they leave off, he takes up the narrative and completes it. This volume was very popular and a second edition came out the year after it was first published. Others followed later.

In 1810 the author published Memoirs of the late Reverend John Clark. The first part of this book deals with Mr. Clark's diary, edited by Mr. Jay. To this he has affixed his "Remarks on the Character and Narrative." This book was not a success; there was no demand for it. No one was quite so perplexed as Mr. Jay himself as to why it did not enjoy the large reception accorded his other writings. He had labored on it with greater diligence and care than on any other work.[1]

Mr. Jay was often asked to write the preface to a publication, and this he gladly did.[2] He also published a number of smaller items, such as An Essay on Marriage, A Charge to a Minister's Wife, and numerous funeral orations which appear in the bibliography.[3] He occasionally furnished articles for religious magazines but most of these were sermons.

Mr. Jay's Autobiography was not begun until 1843, when he was in his seventy-fourth year. Since his children had asked that he leave behind a record of his life and activities, he complied with their request, and wrote an autobiography in the form of a series of seventeen personal letters addressed to his

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 107.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., pp. 206 f.

[3]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 108.

children. He felt that this method allowed him the greatest possible freedom and was best adapted to his age and disposition. As he had kept no diary and had no documentary sources before him, he had to produce this work entirely from memory. One soon discovers in the Autobiography a want of orderly arrangement of material, and dates are entirely lacking. Quite naturally, there is considerable overlapping throughout. One also notes an absence of continuity, and the movement is not as free and rapid as it might be. There is a very apparent lack of completeness, order, and arrangement.

The second part of the Autobiography is the "Supplement" furnished by the editors, which gives much helpful information omitted in the earlier part. The next section contains twenty-three "Reminiscences of Distinguished Contemporaries" -- both ministers and laymen. The fourth part furnishes some very interesting and enlightening correspondence of Mr. Jay and his friends. Taken as a whole, this volume presents a splendid picture of the author.

The Popular Religious Educator

We have seen that Mr. Jay made his greatest contribution to the evangelical cause as an author. And if only we examine his works carefully, we shall find that it was as a popular religious educator that he really shone. He made religion a reality; he brought the living Christ into the home as few writers have done. In his special discourses and his devotional

classics the great Redeemer is set forth in all His fulness. In every one of these, religion is divested of all philosophical speculation and is set before the reader as the greatest and most important matter in all the world. With William Jay, man's relation to his God is no vague theory -- it is a most personal, vital and necessary thing, a matter of life or death.

Everything that he wrote was literally filled with teaching about the great principles and practice of our faith. He had the rare ability to take some truth, often one which was obscure, and treat it in a very popular and appealing manner. Great wisdom and forethought were exercised in the selection of his themes, all of which are timeless and have a direct bearing on life. Christian instruction is given on almost every subject which faces one in life. He deals with war and peace, with crime and good government, with the infinite value of proper home training. The Bible and its teachings are set in the most prominent place.

The purpose which Mr. Jay always had foremost in his mind was that his writings should be helpful. Most of the religious literature that came from the press at this time was practical in its nature. This was eminently true of those writers whose spiritual heritage may be traced to the Evangelical Revival, either directly or indirectly. They felt so keenly the real worth of practical religion that they would have looked upon any writing which did not affect the spiritual life as a

useless waste of time.[1] It was said of John Wesley, "His bent was above all things practical, and to him Christianity was not founded on argument, but on the actual life of God in the soul of man through Jesus Christ."[2] What was here said about that great leader of Methodism is equally true of William Jay.

The greatest tribute which can be paid to Mr. Jay's works is that they met a crying need and found lodgement in many weary hearts. They strengthened the weak and encouraged the strong. They brought new hope to the disconsolate and courage to the fearful. They gave peace to the dying and inspiration to the living. Even at this period, there was a great dearth of religious literature. Men were longing for the truths of the Gospel couched in the simple Saxon of their native tongue. Mr. Jay's works answered this longing, and in many respects merited the praise accorded the work of one of his distinguished predecessors.

> The young reader opens the book and wonders where its charm can be. But those who labour and are heavy-laden, who have accompanied their dearest to the gates of the unknown country and said their bitter farewell, those who have buried the impossible ambitions and hopeless hopes of youth, those who have found out how difficult it is to know the most momentous things and how trivial are the things we know, those who have long endured the loathsome insistence of temptation and besetting sin -- all these feel in the book the touch of a brother's hand and the throb of a heart which

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[1] J. H. Overton, The Evangelical Revival In The Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1886), p. 110.

[2] W. B. Selbie, Nonconformity -- Its Origin and Progress (London: Williams and Norgate, n.d.), p. 179.

> understands them. As long as the world is full of tears, and men still look for the star of hope to rise above it, this book may perhaps endure.[1]

William Jay The Poet

Mr. Jay did not pose as a poet, nor did he wish to become one. He would not allow himself to enter that field seriously lest he detract from his preaching. He composed a poem of some length, and doubtless of considerable worth, entitled "The Garden", along with other poetical selections which he at one time intended to publish. "But he afterwards altered his mind, falling back on this early resolution, -- to make everything subservient to preaching. It was his special desire that none of his poetry should be sent forth to the public after his death."[2] However, a few of his poems have been saved either in their original manuscript form or as the author permitted them to be published.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

> "There dwelt the Man, the flower of human kind,
> Whose visage mild bespoke the noble mind;
> There dwelt the Soldier, who his sword ne'er drew
> But in a righteous cause, to freedom true;
> There dwelt the Hero, who ne'er killed for fame,
> Yet gained more glory than a Caesar's name;

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[1]James Stalker, "An Appreciation, Baxter's Saints Everlasting Rest" as quoted in Evangelical Succession 2d series, Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1883), pp. 241 f.

[2]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 139.

"There dwelt the Statesman, who, devoid of art,
Gave soundest counsels from an upright heart.
And, O Columbia, by thy sons confessed!
There dwelt the Father of the realms he blest,
Who felt no wish to make his mighty praise,
Like other chiefs, the means himself to raise;
But there retiring, breathed in pure renown,
And felt a grandeur that disdain'd a crown."[1]

Life itself and the world of nature furnished him with subjects upon which to write. One of his most touching poems, "Statira,"[2] was prompted by the passing of his youngest daughter at the age of nineteen. This poem, which bears the name of his daughter, has twenty stanzas and breathes a spirit of resignation to the will of God and of rejoicing in a triumphant faith.

If there were times oi sorrow at Percy Place, there were also times of happiness. Mr. Jay crystalized his thoughts into a beautiful little poem of two stanzas when, on the day his daughter, Anne, was married, he presented her with a Bible.[3] He later wrote another poem upon receiving this daughter's portrait

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[1]William Jay, "George Washington", as quoted by Cyrus Jay in his Recollections of William Jay, p. 139. This sonnet was composed impromptu by the author as he stood and gazed upon a painting of Mt. Vernon, the home of General George Washington. The painting was presented to Mr. Jay by his son, William, and hung over his library door.

[2]William Jay, "Written on the death of Miss Statira Jay, Who Was Seized with a Fatal Fever During Her Father's Journey into Devonshire, and Died August 31st, 1820." This manuscript may be seen in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

[3]William Jay, "Lines Written and Presented on the Morning of Her Marriage to His Very Dear Daughter, Mrs. Bolton, by Her Affectionate Father, William Jay." May 11th, 1811. This poem may be seen in MS form in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

from America.[1] The tenderness and human insight of the poet are very marked in a poem which he composed and sent to a little girl on her birthday.[2] A visit to the sea shore caused him to write his best nature poem.[3] In 1800 William Jay made a visit to his native village of Tisbury. This called forth one of his longest poems. In it he reviews his life and shows how he has been led of God every step of the way. The omnipotence of God resounds through this poem from the beginning to the end.[4] Another poem was occasioned by his receiving a pair of turtle-doves from a friend.[5]

Mr. Jay had a definite meter and rhyme scheme throughout all his poems. These varied with the different selections. He had the heart and mind of a poet, and possessed a considerable

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[1]William Jay, "Lines Written Upon Receiving from America the Picture of My Daughter, Mrs. Bolton, by Her Son." July 5, 1840. This poem may be seen in MS form in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

[2]William Jay, "Lines Sent by the Reverend William Jay to a Little Girl on Her Birthday, and, by his permission, printed for the Benefit of the Missionary Bazaar," November 30, 1826. Original MS and Broadsheet copy (no printer given) may be seen at the Municipal Library, Bath.

[3]William Jay, "Lines Composed When Walking on the Beach at Tenemouth", Monday, September 6, 1790. The original MS copy of this poem may be seen in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

[4]William Jay, "Lines Written by the Reverend Mr. Jay, of Bath, on Visiting His Native Village in 1800." It was published in The Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, July 28, 1819. It also appears in The Reverend William Jay - A Memoir, by S. S. Wilson, p. 185. This poem may be seen in Appendix C, p. 259.

[5]William Jay,"Lines Addressed to the Reverend Mr. Monck, and Written Immediately on His Presenting the Author with a Cage of Turtle-Doves." August, 1811. Printed by Houlstons, Wellington.

degree of natural ability. His poems read so smoothly that it seems as if the poet were thinking aloud in verse. He is always very simple, and never fails to display the human touch.

William Jay The Hymn Writer

The many hymns that were published during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth echo the sentiments of the Great Awakening under Whitefield and the Wesleys. The singing of the psalms within the Established Church had become extremely cold and unenthusiastic. Hence there was a clamor from all dissenting bodies for the introduction and use of these hymns which had been conceived in the spirit of the times and reflected them. The same was true to a less degree within the Establishment. "The new movement was an intrusion of the outside Revival forces. The Hymnody showed its revival origin and character in the evangelistic note, in its concern with experimental religion, and its warmth amid chilling surroundings."[1]

There was a sincere effort on the part of many Dissenting ministers and other zealous Christians to capture the blessings which were still felt from this great movement and to revive the zeal and interest wherever it had waned or died out. They wanted to get into the evangelical current and go forward

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[1]Louis F. Benson, "The Hymnody of the Evangelical Revival", The Princeton Theological Review (Princeton, N. J., University Press, 1914) Volume XII, January, 1914, No. 1, p. 80.

with the work of Christ. Few things made such a definite contribution to this cause as did the great hymns of the period. How was this spirit which pervaded them to be conveyed to the individual church in the densely populated cities or in the remote hamlets? Since hymns were just coming into general use, and there was a scarcity of books, how were they to be properly distributed? William Jay solved this problem by publishing his own hymnal in 1791.[1] He had a great admiration for Isaac Watts and his works, but felt a lack of hymns in peculiar meter. Hence he made a selection from a number of the best hymn writers and put them into his hymnal along with a few of his own in peculiar meter.[2] This hymnal was published expressly for the use of the congregation at Argyle Chapel. An enlarged edition of this volume appeared in 1797.

In 1815 the author published a second collection of hymns.[3] This, too, was meant entirely for the use of his own congregation. In 1833 Mr. Jay published a greatly enlarged edition of this hymnal.[4] But in the preface of this one, he at least referred to himself as the editor and not the author. He was frank and eager to confess how freely he had borrowed, not only from Isaac Watts, but also from many of the other good hymn

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[1]William Jay, A Selection of Hymns of Peculiar Metre, (2d ed.; Bath, Samuel Hazard, 1797).

[2]Ibid., p. iv.

[3]William Jay, A Selection of Hymns, As An Appendix to Dr. Watts' (Bath: Gye and Son, 1815).

[4]William Jay, Hymns As An Appendix to Dr. Watts' (Bath: George Wood, 1833).

writers.[1] He has selected many of the best known hymns without listing their authors, and put them into the publications which are generally known as "Jay's Hymns." However, as this practice was quite common at that time, this may be overlooked to some extent. The literary conscience of that period was not so acute as it is today. In fact, many writers during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth published collections of hymns "As An Appendix to Dr. Watts."[2] John Wesley published a collection of hymns in 1779, the original title of which was A Collection of Hymns for Use of the People Called Methodists.[3] Although Mr. Wesley translated a number of the hymns, he wrote only two of them. And yet, the publication came to be generally known as "Wesley's Hymns." Martin Madan (1726-1790) made a collection of hymns which were first published in 1760. Some of them were his own and others were not. Not one of them bore the name of its author. Yet the volume was referred to as "Madan's Hymns."

There is another thing which Mr. Jay was in the habit of doing that we cannot overlook or excuse. Quite often he changed a word or a phrase in one of the very familiar hymns, having the mistaken idea that by so doing he had improved it.

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[1] Ibid., p. v.

[2] John Julian, A Dictionary of Hymnology (London: John Murray, 1892), p. 259.

[3] John Wesley, A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1876). Mr. Wesley at least took the time to list the various hymn writers.

> Yet it cannot be denied, that as nothing human is faultless, so a reviewer much inferior to the original composer may be able now and then to introduce a slight alteration for the better; and we all know how much the beauty or force of a stanza will be aided by the change of a single term.[1]

However, if this practice was so common that even a James Montgomery did not hesitate to do it,[2] we cannot be too much surprised or too severe when we discover that a hymn writer of lesser note was guilty of the same offense.

Mr. Jay wrote very few original hymns. "I also published an Appendix of Hymns, but the contents are principally selections from other authors; and I am answerable for about twenty new composures."[3] Of this number, a few were written for special occasions. He officiated at the opening of many chapels, and for some of these services he also composed an appropriate hymn.[4]

Any contribution which Mr. Jay made as a compiler or a composer of hymns was limited entirely to his own congregation. There was no general use made of his hymns. None of them are

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[1]William Jay, Hymns As An Appendix to Dr. Watts' (Bath: George Wood, 1833), p. vii.

[2]John Julian, op. cit., p. 764.

[3]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 108.

[4]William Jay, "Hymn To Be Sung at the Opening of the New Place of Worship at Colerne, on Wednesday, 15th September, 1824." This hymn bears the signature W. J-y, and was printed broadsheet by Clark of Bath in 1824. It also appears as Hymn No. 385 in the 1833 edition of Mr. Jay's hymnal. This sample of his hymns appears in Appendix D, p. 261.

listed in The Congregational Hymn Book which was published in 1836.[1] Surely if the hymns of this distinguished Congregational minister had merited it, they would have been included in this standard book of praise of his own denomination. It is also significant that not a single one of his hymns is listed in Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology.

His Style as a Writer

William Jay wrote very rapidly in order to develop for himself a suitable style. He took the advice of Mrs. Hannah More when she encouraged him in his early days to write as much and as rapidly as possible.[2] He kept his pen at hand and wrote for practice as often as time would permit. Mr. Jay believed in going ahead with his writing so as to utilize the inspiration and zeal of the moment. Then when he had completed his composition, he did his revising. To facilitate matters, he actually worked out a kind of shorthand all his own.[3] This enabled him to record his thoughts as they flowed freely and quickly from his mind.

He endeavored throughout his career as a writer to be mindful of the fact that profundity is often to be found in

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[1]Josiah Conder, ed., The Congregational Hymn Book: A Supplement to Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns (London: Jackson and Walford, 1836). This book was published in compliance with a Resolution passed by the Congregational Union of England and Wales in May, 1833.

[2]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 124.

[3]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 305.

simplicity. We observed that as a preacher this was one of his greatest and most marked characteristics. The same is true of him as an author. He uses pure Saxon words of few syllables. " . . . the discourses of Mr. Jay make a considerable approximation to that chastened simplicity, and unaffected beauty, so conspicuous in Addison. His style is perspicuous as that of Tillotson, unpretending as that of Bunyan, and almost as elegant as that of Atterbury."[1] His language is picturesque and figurative, and always concrete.

> The happiness we derive from creatures is like a beggar's garment -- it is made up of pieces, and patches, and is worth very little after all. But the blessedness we derive from the Saviour is single, and complete.[2]

The writer makes frequent use of antithesis. For example, "All alike gave, but all gave not alike."[3] Or take another case: "Some things are good, but not pleasant, and some things are pleasant, but not good."[4] There are times when he soars to great heights and has actually been compared with Milton.[5] There are other times when he is lacking in elegance and refinement. However, Mr. Jay used a more select and refined language in his writing than he did when he was preaching.

Simplicity is very noticeable not only in his language

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[1]Samuel S. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 96 f.

[2]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, II, pp. 101 f.

[3]William Jay, Female Scripture Characters, p. 159.

[4]William Jay, Twenty Four Sermons Preached at Argyle Chapel, p. 394.

[5]Wilson, op. cit., p. 93.

but also in the choice and development of his themes. He develops the discourse from a short text or from a passage of greater length. Sometimes he takes a biblical incident and draws a very helpful message from it. Mr. Jay always had a comprehensive grasp of his subject, and could see the end from the beginning. He often used a very brief but striking introduction.[1] There are times when he grips you even with his first word. Some have criticized him, saying that he frequently raised the expectation of the hearers so high in the introduction that he was not able to maintain this level throughout his devotional exercise or discourse.

His originality is not characterized by any ambitious or studied effort. It came quite naturally; and it is very marked. "He was not used to walk in trodden paths. He struck out on a course of his own, and has thrown around a subject of the most difficult kind -- for nothing is more difficult than for a man to speak justly of his own character -- an interest which arrests and secures the attention of the general reader."[2]

Mr. Jay drove home all of his messages with a tremendous force. He appealed very strongly to the mind and heart, and thus moved the will to action. Even by one brief devotional exercise he could create a lasting impression. Mr. Jay's effectiveness may be explained, in part at least, by the fact

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[1]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, III, p.537.

[2]Francis Cunningham, "Review of William Jay's Autobiography", The Christian Observer, June, 1855, p. 389.

that he knew where he wanted to go and how to get there.

> 'I like force in connection with a man's mind and character; it strikes and rivets me. I like the energy of a Johnson -- the force of Franklin -- the strength of Barrow. I much prefer power and impressiveness to mere elegance; but what I value, and what I have aimed at is impression, energy, power. I like a sermon or a book to strike, to penetrate, to come home.'[1]

A Truly Great Spirit

William Jay was too big to be little. Every word that he has written breathes the spirit of Christian charity. Always bearing in mind that he was a follower of Jesus Christ and a minister of the Gospel, he wrote accordingly. It was extremely difficult for an Independent minister to manifest a Christ-like spirit in the face of such opposition as was prevalent in the early nineteenth century. So many unkind and even untrue statements were hurled at him. He early resolved to take no notice of them, and his writings not only reflect no bitterness, but are exemplary of genuine Christianity. He lived to see this opposition cease in that city of fashion, and it was his charitable spirit, so manifest in all his works, which caused this bitterness and enmity to disappear.

> 'How I dislike these little men who are always snarling and snapping at other bodies; who can see nothing good in any communion but their own! I find much excellence to appreciate, to admire, and to love in every Christian fellowship; and I am not only disposed to admire it, but I am bound by my principles to love it.'[2]

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[1]William Jay, as quoted by Thomas Wallace in A Portraiture of the Late Reverend William Jay, p. 57.

[2]William Jay, as quoted by Thomas Wallace in A Portraiture of the Late Reverend William Jay, pp. 72 f.

William Jay had a broadmindedness that refused to stoop to anything that savored of narrowness or bigotry. But he never allowed this to drift into mere absence of conviction. He believed that one could be in agreement with those who differed from him without compromising a single important principle. "I have always treated those who in this matter conscientiously differed from me, with Christian candour; and I must say they have abundantly repaid it."[1] This writer also manifested a spirit of Christian consistency in all that he ever wrote.

One of the most common criticisms hurled at Dissenters was that they were narrow and fanatical, utterly lacking in vision and consideration for others. However, this was not the case with William Jay. His ecumenical outlook as a writer was far ahead of his day, and this is one of his greatest characteristics. He refused to be confined to his own church but looked beyond all barriers -- physical, racial, and denominational -- to the Church of Christ scattered over the entire world.

> It is the glory of the Gospel to set us above the prejudices which have so long and so unhappily kept men at variance -- and to teach us that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth, -- that men are not our enemies because they live at the other side of a channel or a mountain -- that they are not to be bought and sold as slaves because the sun has jetted their complexions . . . Christianity commands us to love all the human race, and to regard as our neighbours the inhabitants of the remotest regions.[2]

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 195.

[2]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 307.

How can one better teach the solidarity of the human race? Mr. Jay firmly believed that we are all bound together and what affects one affects all.[1] His writings are permeated with the thought that Christians, the world over, enjoy a oneness by virtue of their serving the same Lord. Although they are outwardly divided, they are aware at the same time of a deeper unity. His books found their way into the homes of ministers and laymen of all denominations, and thus he made a considerable contribution to the cause of Christian unity. A tribute that men often and unconsciously paid to Mr. Jay was that they could not tell his church affiliation by reading his works. He dealt, not with the little points on which men disagree, but with the great principles on which they stand together. "They are on great, catholic, practical, vital themes; valuable to all, interesting to all, necessary for all."[2] This fact, to some extent, accounts for the measure of success which he enjoyed as a writer.

A Pen With a Passion

The same flaming heart which made William Jay so acceptable in the pulpit is felt throbbing in ~~every line that he wrote~~ his Its mighty pulsations go on undiminished even after the author

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[1]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, II, p. 169.

[2]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., p. 187.

was well up in years. The evangelical nature of all his writings was the thing which made them of so great value. It is humanly impossible to describe fully their worth. Even to attempt to do so would be like trying to describe the influence of a saintly mother in the home.

> It is true of John Newton, and it is true of almost all leading Evangelicals, that they were in themselves, in their personal influence, in their characters, habits, and life, more than can be fully estimated by printed copies of discourses, or by accurate reports of conversation. They were felt to be spiritual powers, wherever they moved. With some men we cannot talk ten minutes without feeling their superiority. So it was with these leaders, who, though not intellectual, had a spiritual superiority which was confessed by all sorts of people who came within the circle of their influential acquaintanceship.[1]

Mr. Jay looked at the multitudes through the Master's eyes. He never lost sight of them; nor did he forget the infinite worth of the individual soul. This was the subject upon which he constantly wrote. "You consider everything as trifling compared with the everlasting salvation of the souls of men."[2] Imagine the effect produced by such a statement as that on the lives of tens of thousands of people as they were conducting their private devotions!

The author dealt in earnest and at great length with the shortness and uncertainty of life. He never failed to drive home this solemn thought. When in the prime of life Lord Byron passed away, Mr. Jay sent forth a message lamenting the fact that

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[1]John Stoughton, Religion in England Under Queen Anne and the Georges (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878), II, pp. 98 f.

William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 339.

Byron had made so little use of his great gifts and resources. The message was printed and widely circulated in many parts of the Christian world.

> 'O Byron! thy premature fall gave rise to these solemn reflections. Who can help lamenting the perverse and unhallowed use of thy stupendous powers! Who can think, unmoved, of the vigour of thy intellect -- the riches of thy imagination -- thy breathless sublimities of conception and expression! Who can think unmoved of the going down of such a sun at noon! of a genius that might have ranked with Milton, quenched forever; and leaving so much to admire -- so much to deplore -- so much to abhor!'[1]

Few writers have ever laid more emphasis on the utter folly of delay in the matter of making a personal decision for Christ. He always stressed this important matter in a very sane and forceful manner. When you read his writings you can hear the man himself speak; and when he calls for a personal decision, you feel as if he were standing in your presence. The call is so personal, so persuasive, and so powerful.

> Such is the question with which God addresses you this evening. And what answer do you return? --- I cannot imagine any thing more awful than this moment of suspense. Your relations; your Christian friends; the enemy of your souls; the angels of God, and God himself -- are all waiting to hear what reply you will make to the solemn inquiry.[2]

His Renown as a Writer

It is amazing that one with such a humble beginning, meager education, and nonconformist connection could have risen

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[1]William Jay, as quoted by The Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, June 1, 1824.

[2]William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, I, p. 547.

to such magnificent heights in the religious world. His industry and resolve, his consistency and perseverance, and his child-like faith in the ultimate triumph of the purpose of God enabled him to rise from obscurity to an enviable place among the foremost popular religious writers of his day. His writings early found a place in many minds and hearts and established William Jay's reputation as an author in the same manner in which his natural endowments and unremitting toil had years before made a name for him as a preacher. From the very beginning of his career as a writer, he enjoyed a large measure of popularity. His works were freely perused and purchased by men of all ecclesiastical connections and ranks of life. The praise which both clergy and laymen of the Established Church lavished upon this author is very noticeable.

> The Reverend William Jay has terminated his earthly career; and has been advanced to his immortal crown. The intelligence will deeply affect the entire Protestant communities of this and other lands: for it may be scarcely too much to say, that his fame both as a preacher and an author is coextensive with the language in which are contained the treasures of his spiritual literature. Episcopalians as we are, we should yet blush for ourselves if we could be niggard of our veneration for a name so deservedly honoured and revered.[1]

Now such a statement as this coming from a person of an entirely different ecclesiastical outlook, is very significant indeed. He is not using figurative language to express himself. He is not resorting to the use of the hyperbole when he says that Mr. Jay's writings are coextensive with the English language. No,

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[1]Supplement to The Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, January 4, 1854.

a Churchman would not make any such assertion. He always speaks with measured terms, and especially is this true when he is describing a Dissenter. It is common knowledge that William Jay's books were known, read, and appreciated throughout the British Isles. They were used by those who occupied high station in life and by those who lived on very modest means. In 1838 Mr. Jay wrote a letter to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, offering his Morning Exercises for the Queen's acceptance.[1] But for every volume which found its way into the royal household, tens of thousands found their way into the homes of the middle class and of those of modest circumstances. Mr. Jay's books never became commonplace, were always good property, and sold very readily.

But this author's works enjoyed a much wider and more general circulation. They were by no means confined to the British Isles. They soon reached France and Germany and other parts of Europe, America, Australia, and elsewhere.

> In the vast continent of America, the circulation of Mr. Jay's books has not only been wide, but universal; and they have been conveyed, not merely to our Australian colonies, but to the South Sea Islands, to India, and even to China, for the benefit of thousands. We have been informed that in America, especially, his writings have been prized as highly as in his father-land.[2]

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[1]A letter signed by William Jay and dated March 8, 1838, from Bath and addressed to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, offering the Morning Exercises for the Queen's acceptance, is to be seen at the Municipal Library, Bath, in the Hunt Collection, Part 2, p. 152. It is presumed to be the original draft of the letter which he later sent to the Queen.

[2]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., pp. 183 f.

It is very interesting to note that several complete editions of his works were published in America before even the first appeared in England.[1] This fact is very significant. It indicates that he had a wide and appreciative following. An American writer, after having praised Mr. Jay as a preacher, spoke of his written works as "diffusing the light of truth still more extensively, and enjoying the rare privilege of fanning the flame of devotion at ten thousand altars, on both sides of the Atlantic.[2]

A visitor upon one occasion called to see the President of the United States. When he was ushered into the library, he found that the President had been reading for his devotions Mr. Jay's Morning Exercise for that particular day.[3] His Morning and Evening Exercises did more to make him known as a writer, and were more greatly and generally appreciated than anything which he wrote. Commenting on their acceptance and helpfulness, a clergyman of the Church of England said that they " . . . are to be found in the huts of furthest America, and India, and Australia. I know that they are in the tent of one young soldier in the dreary mountains which separate India from Affghanistan; and I bless God that I know it."[4] I have cited these

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 108.

[2]Ascribed to Archibald Alexander, "Standard Works of the Reverend William Jay of Argyle Chapel, Bath" in Biblical Repertory and Theological Review (Philadelphia: Russell and Martien, 1833), V, p. 379.

[3]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 271.

[4]J. G. Bedford, as quoted in Jay's Jubilee Memorial, pp. 114 f.

two cases to indicate that the works of this author had a wide circulation and that they were exceedingly helpful to persons of all classes and conditions of life.

> If Christian excellence be excellence of the highest kind, if Christian usefulness be usefulness of the noblest order, what, we ask, can for one moment, compare with the usefulness of him who, either by his preaching or his writings, or by both, is the honoured instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God, of saving hundreds of souls from moral and spiritual death?[1]

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[1]Thomas Wallace, op. cit., p. 222.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT
of
WILLIAM JAY

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THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF WILLIAM JAY

In order to have a true understanding of the religious thought of this Evangelical, we must be familiar with the cardinal tenets of the great body of Evangelicals of this period. Therefore, I propose to list the nine articles, drawn up during William Jay's lifetime, which were the basis of the great Evangelical Alliance which met in London in 1846.[1] We shall then consider them in the order in which they appear in their official listing in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, and see how far Mr. Jay agreed with them, and where he differed.[2] Next we shall consider the Calvinistic doctrines in his religious thought which were not dealt with in the above-mentioned articles. Finally, we shall briefly consider how William Jay emerges from the two main criticisms of the Evangelical Movement, that of the Oxford Movement that it failed to reach and uphold an adequate doctrine of the Church, and that of modern economic historians that it was totally uninterested in the social conditions of the people.

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[1]The Evangelical Alliance, organized in Freemasons' Hall, London, 1846, was an association of Evangelical Christians gathered for the promotion of Christian union and the advancement of religious liberty. Eight hundred delegates were in attendance. The Rev. John Angell James, one of the editors of Jay's Autobiography, was one of the three official representatives of the Independents.

[2]Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912) VI, p. 601.

The Nine Articles of the Evangelical Alliance[1]

1. The divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

2. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

3. The unity of the Godhead, and the Trinity of the Persons therein.

4. The utter depravity of human nature in the consequence of the Fall.

5. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement for the sins of mankind, and His mediatorial intercession and reign.

6. The justification of the sinner by faith alone.

7. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.

8. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

9. The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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[1]Ibid.

The dawn of the eighteenth century saw many controversies, theological and otherwise, not the least of which was that of Deism. It was an age of questioning and doubt. The goddess, Reason, who had been ushered in upon the scene at an earlier date and who had remained somewhat in the background, now came forward to receive her crown and scepter, and then to mount her throne. Good men were beginning to fear for the ark of God.

> The existence of God was scarcely called into question by the boldest doubters; or such doubts, if they found place at all, were expressed only under the most covert implications. But, short of this, all the mysteries of religion were scrutinized; all the deep and hidden things of faith were brought in question, and submitted to the test of reason. Is there such a thing as a revelation from God to men of Himself and of His will? If so, what is its nature, its purpose, its limits? What are the attributes of God? What is the meaning of life? What is man's hereafter? Does a divine spirit work in man? and if it does, what are its operations, and how are they distinguishable? What is spirit? and what is matter? What does faith rest upon? What is to be said of inspiration, and authority, and the essential attributes of a church?[1]

Now it was just such questions as these which caused earnest and devout Christians to bestir themselves, to unite their hearts, and to crystallize their thoughts. They came out into the open to face the world with strong, positive affirmations concerning the vital elements of their faith. They likewise faced their brethren who were within the Church of Christ. But ~~is~~ in so doing, they did not mean to thrust themsleves forward in a pharisaical manner as being better than their brothers or to condemn Christians who might not hold the tenets of Evangelicalism. They

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[1]Charles J. Abbey and John H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1887), pp. 3 f.

held to certain beliefs with all their heart and mind and concerned themselves with them greatly. "The fundamental doctrines of Evangelicalism are no monopoly of the party, they are not certain peculiar views held by them exclusively and by no others. That which differentiates them is not a distinctive essence, but a distinctive emphasis."[1]

1. The Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures

The first matter to be dealt with and agreed upon by the members of the Evangelical Alliance was the significance which they attached to the Holy Scriptures. The Evangelicals affirmed them to be unique in their character and origin and accepted them as having been divinely inspired. They held the theories which amounted almost to Verbal Inspiration, and their teaching is based either upon that or a very similar view.[2] Leaders of the Establishment were willing to concede a place of primacy to Scripture, but they were inclined to retain the Thirty-Nine Articles along with the teaching of the Church and tradition as well. They felt that the acceptance of the Bible as the supreme authority must be justified by reason as well as by conscience.[3] The Reformers believed and taught that we are to accept the Scriptures not because of the voice of the Church or tradition,

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[1]Elliot Binns, The Evangelical Movement In The English Church (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1928), p. 98.

[2]Ibid., p. 94.

[3]Ibid., p. 92.

but rather because of their divine origin, their own self-authentication and the response with which they meet in the reader's soul. Calvin strongly supported this doctrine, and urged us very forcefully to hold to this truth.

> . . . that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by him, we no longer believe, either on our own judgment or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but, in a way superior to human judgment, feel perfectly assured -- as much so as if we beheld the divine image visibly impressed on it -- that it comes to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God.[1]

All types of Evangelicals, both within and without the Established Church, are in full accord in accepting the authority of the Bible as supreme.[2] But the Bible is not only the supreme authority; it is also sufficient. Over against the Romanists, who at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century set up tradition as of equal authority with the Bible,[3] stand the Evangelicals who look to the Scriptures and not to the Church or tradition as the final authority.

William Jay agreed with the Evangelicals as to the origin and authority of the Scriptures, and what has been said of Charles Simeon in this connection is equally true of him. "He never doubted the absolute truth of every word of the Bible in

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[1]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879), I, p. 72.

[2]Binns, op. cit., p. 95.

[3]James Hastings Nichols, Primer For Protestants (New York: Association Press, 1947), p. 62.

its full, plain, and natural sense; he accepted the whole edifice of doctrine raised upon it by the divines whom his school followed."[1] After affirming that Scripture came by the inspiration of God, Mr. Jay adds succintly, "So that whoever was the penman, He was the author."[2]

2. The Interpretation of Scripture

It is not at all surprising that once the Evangelicals had agreed among themselves as to the significance of the sacred Scriptures, their thoughts should turn next to the matter of interpretation. But it is surprising at first sight to read the second article upon which they agreed. They insisted upon "the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures." We have enjoyed this great privilege so long that we have all but forgotten that men have not always had it. This is a strong reaction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

> Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees that no one, relying on his own skill, shall in matters of faith and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, -- wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church -- whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures -- hath held and doth hold; or even

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[1] Francis Warre Cornish, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1910), Part I, pp. 24 f.

[2] William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, II, p. 36.

> contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published.[1]

This clearly places the right and duty of interpreting Scripture in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, which is just another way of saying that the authority of the Church is above that of Scripture.

The Evangelicals revolted at such an idea. They felt that to be so bound was not only an outright denial of their religious liberties but it was even an intrusion into the inmost sanctities of their own hearts. With them religion was, after all, a personal matter -- a matter between a man and his Maker. They believed that God had revealed Himself to man through His Word, and by His Spirit, and that this revelation was true. Hence, they affirmed that God still reveals Himself to man in the same manner. They would reject the idea that in the interpretation of Scripture we must follow the teaching of the Church and that of tradition.[2] It is not that each man desired a different interpretation, but rather that he might be freed from all the impediments and formalities of institutionalism and go straight to God in his quest for divine truth and guidance. All else was brushed aside. Mr. Jay and other Evangelicals accepted wholeheartedly the priesthood of believers and the mighty impact

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[1]"The Decrees of the Council of Trent", Session IV, Discussions on Scripture and Tradition, as quoted by A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1863), p. 92.

[2]Vide, note 2, p. 221.

which the Word of God, aided by the Holy Spirit, made upon their own hearts as authoritative and sufficient. And from that day to the present moment men have treasured this Reformed position very dearly.

3. The Doctrine of the Trinity

Even though the fires of the Trinitarian Controversy were no longer raging as they had been in the previous century, they were still smouldering. The issue, though not paramount, was still a live one and had to be dealt with.

Evangelicals, in their effort not only to avoid the errors of this controversy, but also to grasp a true conception of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, insisted that there is but one God and that there are three persons in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence or power or force. He is a person who dwells in the hearts of believing children the world over, and furnishes them with power and guidance.

> A firm belief in the person and power of God the Holy Spirit has ever been the mark of Evangelicals. When this belief has been strong among them they have been much used by God, when it has become vague and weak their power has lapsed with it. By this belief the faithful have ever with them the realized consciousness of the Divine presence, a presence in the heart which is independent of place or circumstance. This is the only 'Real Presence' about which Evangelicals are anxious; having it, they need no other.[1]

Jesus Christ is looked upon as the great Mediator who is at the throne of God interceding on our behalf at this moment. God the

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[1]Binns, op. cit., p. 104.

Father is not some wicked tyrant or spy, as the older Evangelicals held Him to be. He is a loving Father with a tenderness, an interest, and a love which defy human description. The Fatherhood of God all Evangelicals believed. This is the only true basis for the brotherhood of man.

William Jay accepted the doctrine of the Trinity. He thought of God as a tender, compassionate, and loving Father. He dealt at great length with the Father in his preaching, teaching, and especially in his prayers. He had a great idea of God. He, like John Foster, was constantly "passing afar from the littleness and anthropomorphism which so confine and degrade our contemplations and devotions."[1] He never ceased to sing the praises of his Redeemer. "The value of his sacrifice was infinite: and every end that could have been answered by the destruction of a world of sinners, has been equally and better answered by the death of the Saviour. --- Nothing will effectually satisfy an awakened conscience, but what satisfied the justice of God."[2] The Holy Spirit was a reality to Mr. Jay and a source of comfort and strength throughout his long ministry.

4. The Total Depravity of Human Nature

The Evangelicals pressed their claims for "the utter de-

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[1]John Foster, Critical Essays (London: Bohn, 1860), II, p. 366. John Foster was a Baptist minister of England, a contemporary and admirer of William Jay.

[2]William Jay, Morning Exercises, II, p. 367.

pravity of human nature in consequence of the Fall." They believed that man was a creature made in the image of Almighty God, and that for a while after his creation he enjoyed an enviable state of communion with God. But this state of perfect fellowship between the Creator and the creature was broken by the entry of sin. Man, because of the consciousness of his sin, could no longer hold this communion with God. In this fallen state man lost his original righteousness. His entire nature became corrupt. His soul thereby became spiritually dead, and he was in no way able to do anything pleasing to Almighty God.

> Whether Adam ever 'fell' or not, I am a 'fallen creature', and I know it. Our moral task is no mere canalising or embanking the course of a stream; it has to begin higher up with the purification of the bitter waters at their source. Hence, when we feel as we ought to feel about the evil in ourselves, we cannot help recognising that our position is not so much that of someone who has broken a wise and salutary regulation, as of one who has insulted or proved false to a person of supreme excellence, entitled to wholehearted devotion. [1]

This corruption which came upon Adam through the Fall has been passed on to the entire human race so that man is totally depraved and of himself is wholly incapable of making the least effort toward his own reclamation. There is nothing whatsoever that he can do. If any succor is to be forthcoming, it must proceed from the divine side and not the human. Those zealous Christians believed this with all their heart and soul and ordered their lives accordingly. William Jay held fast to this dictrine. Few ministers have had a more realistic conception of sin and of man's utter wretchedness than did he.

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[1] A. E. Taylor, The Faith of a Moralist (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1930), p. 207.

> Sin is a pollution the most deep and diffusive: it stops not at the surface, but penetrates the inner man of the heart; it spreads through every power, from the highest intellectual faculty, down to the lowest animal appetite. If any part were left uninjured, it would seem to be the conscience -- but no; the very conscience itself is defiled: and nothing has been too vile to be perpetrated under its permission, and in obedience to its dictates. It is a pollution the most horrible and dangerous; as it disfigures us before God, and renders us odious in his sight. And nothing else does this. Poverty does not; disease does not.[1]

It was this conception of the deplorable plight of the sinner and the forgiveness offered by a loving Savior which was constantly in the mind of this great preacher. He knew from his own experience what it meant to be a fallen man and to be utterly helpless out of Christ.

5. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

The Evangelicals accepted Jesus Christ as the God-Man without any reservations or qualifications whatsoever. He had two separate and distinct natures. He was truly God and truly man. He left the wonders and glories of His heavenly kingdom and in His complete humiliation identified Himself with sinful and suffering humanity. Heaven touched earth. The divine entered upon the human. Christ was as much a man as any other who ever walked the sandy shores of Galilee, and yet He was without sin. He was as truly God as He had been before coming into the world in the person of the Babe of Bethlehem. Many Evangelicals, including William Jay, did not fail to believe and preach the Vir-

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[1] William Jay, op. cit., p. 552.

gin Birth.[1] Mr. Jay does not discuss this doctrine but merely accepts it as a divine intervention. But the aspect of Christ's work which was most appealing to the Evangelicals was that of Savior. Knowing himself to be a miserable sinner and in his fallen state utterly lost and helpless apart from God, the Evangelical rejoiced when he lifted his eyes to behold the Cross; for he knew that it had a special meaning for him. It meant Redemption. Thus, the Atonement was the main theme of Mr. Jay's preaching. He believed that Jesus Christ was voluntarily crucified on Calvary according to the will of the Father for his sins and for the sins of the world. He knew that Christ died on his behalf as a substitute, making full satisfaction for his sins.

> According to this doctrine the work of Christ is a real satisfaction, of infinite inherent merit, to the vindicatory justice of God; so that He saves his people by doing for them, and in their stead, what they were unable to do for themselves; satisfying the demands of the law in their behalf, and bearing its penalty in their stead; whereby they are reconciled to God, receive the Holy Ghost, and are made partakers of the life of Christ to their present satisfaction and eternal salvation.[2]

This is the view of the Atonement which was held by William Jay and by most of the ardent Evangelicals of his day. It not only frees man from the curse of the law, but it enables him through the Holy Spirit to become partaker of the life of Christ.[3] This theory of the Atonement rejects the Moral Influence Theory which substitutes the moral effect produced by Christ on the

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[1] William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, I, p. 232.

[2] A. A. Hodge, op. cit., pp. 563 f.

[3] Ibid.

hearts of men by His life and acts for the idea of expiation or satisfaction of divine justice by vicarious punishment. It also rejects the Governmental and Mystical Theories or any other variation of the same.

Mr. Jay and the other Evangelicals never stopped with the Cross and the complete humiliation of our Lord. They looked beyond these to the Resurrection. They firmly held the bodily resurrection of Christ, and His highly exalted state. Once He had returned to the Father, the Mediator took up His work of intercession. One of the most reassuring thoughts of all is the fact that Jesus Christ is at the throne of grace at this very moment interceding with the Father on our behalf. Evangelicals felt that they could never put too great an emphasis upon the Person and Work of Christ.

Mr. Jay believed in the divinity of Christ, and his life as a minister was spent in proclaiming His matchless worth.

> What an infinitely important station does he occupy! What an understanding must he posses to be accurately acquainted with the diversified circumstances and necessities of all the redeemed! How unparalled is that love, which knows no variableness; which renders him, not only in his lowest abasement, but in his highest dignity, the friend of sinners; which induces him, while surrounded by all the adorations of heaven, to listen to the complaints and petitions of each of his people upon the earth; and which never suffers him for one moment to remit the kindness of his attentions![1]

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[1]William Jay, Twenty Four Sermons Preached at Argyle Chapel, p. 278.

6. Justification by Faith

We have been climbing a ladder. We noticed man in his original state and found him incapable of helping himself. He was so helpless and hopeless in that condition that he not only could not help himself, but could not even will to help himself. We then considered the great atoning work of Jesus Christ as the Savior of man in his sad plight. He died, the sinless for the sinful. The act by which the sinner receives the merits of the Atonement and appropriates to himself these great blessings which Christ has made available through His death on the Cross is called Justification by Faith. By this act man receives forgiveness. This great doctrine might well be considered the keystone of all truly Evangelical theology. It strikes at the very heart of the Christian faith. It has come to be associated with the name of Martin Luther, for it was he who propounded and proclaimed that belief which soon became the battle cry of the Reformation -- Justification by Faith. He refers to this doctrine as "master and chief, lord, ruler and judge above every kind of doctrine, which preserves and directs every doctrine of the Church."[1] This belief was the subject of many bitter controversies by earnest and zealous Christians in the early days of the revival.[2] One school maintained that man is justified by faith alone and wholly apart from works. The other taught that

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[1]Martin Luther, Disputations, d. d. I, p. 6 (1537) as quoted by Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation (London: MacMillan and Co., 1941), p. 82.

[2]Binns, op. cit., p. 108.

man is justified by faith which is accompanied by works. The Evangelicals maintained "the justification of the sinner by faith alone." It is all the work of God through Christ. None of it comes from any merits of man. William Jay was heart and soul in affirming his belief in this great doctrine. He said "that every thing else depends upon it, and results from it; that to this we owe all our deliverance and all our hope."[1] He held that we are justified by faith alone, but that a truly redeemed soul should produce fruits in keeping with his new life. We are justified by faith in Christ. But it is really not faith itself that justifies, but Christ; for He alone can make us right in God's sight. Faith is the necessary requirement to receiving the benefits made available for us through Christ's atoning death.

7. The Work of the Holy Spirit

To all Evangelicals the Holy Spirit figures most prominently. For it is the Spirit who comes to the sinner in quickening power, enabling him to see the error of his way, and inducing the fallen creature to turn to Christ, his Savior. It is by the Holy Spirit that man is first made to realize that he is in a state of condemnation, totally cut off from God and redemption, and without hope. The Spirit of God comes to him and urges him to turn from the darkness of his past into the light of the

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[1] William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 359.

new life freely offered through faith in Christ.

The fact which we wish to bring out very clearly is that this work is all of God. The work of regeneration is very closely related to that of justification. The one is an act; the other is a work. The one refers to something which has been done for us by Christ; the other to something done in us by the Holy Spirit.[1] Even though the two are separate and distinct, they should be considered in the close relation which one bears to the other. Man cannot change his heart. That can be done only by the very power of God at work in his heart in the person of the Holy Spirit; and without His promptings man is utterly unable to do anything. This is the very essence of Evangelicalism --- the belief that the Holy Spirit can and does bring about a transformation in the heart of any creature, however wicked he may be; and with this change there comes assurance. This we see in the immortal example of John Wesley and his evangelical conversion.

> In the evening (24th May, 1738) I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.[2]

William Jay believed that the Holy Spirit works in different ways with different people. He can bring about a cataclysmic change causing a man to be saved, as was the case with

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[1]William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, III, p. 54.

[2]John Wesley, Journal, 24th May, 1738, I, pp. 475 f.

the dying thief upon the cross. "He implored and obtained mercy when the heaven was covered with blackness, and the earth trembled."[1] Or the conversion may be far less spectacular. It may even be so gradual that the person cannot recall the moment when he was saved.

> Many are prone to look for a conversion, always uniform, not only in its effects but in its operation; and also too much bordering on the miraculous. The soul must be exceedingly terrified with fear -- then overwhelmed with anguish -- then plunged into despair -- then suddenly filled with hope, and peace, and joy; and the person must be able to determine the day on which, the sermon under which, or the providence by which, the change was wrought. But this is by no means necessarily, or generally the case. There is a variety in the temperaments and habits of men; and in the methods employed to bring them to repentance.[2]

All Evangelicals maintain that though the Christian may not know when and where he came to know Christ, he will be sure of the fact that he has been born again. And in whatever form this change came about, William Jay always looked upon it as the work of the Holy Spirit. Also, it was a complete change. "In conversion, as in the alteration of an old edifice, we first demolish; and this only furnishes us with rubbish and ruins: but afterwards we raise up an orderly beautiful building, in which we are refreshed and charmed."[3]

Mr. Jay felt that it was utterly futile for any minister to try to do his work without relying upon the Spirit for guid-

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[1]William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, II, p. 221.

[2]William Jay, Twenty Four Sermons Preached at Argyle Chapel, p. 12.

[3]Ibid., p. 199.

ance, strength, and comfort; and taught that the minister's success depends entirely upon the manner in which he looked to the sufficiency of His grace.[1]

He never failed to realize the great work of the Spirit in Sanctification. Once the sinner had been converted, it was the "fresh application of divine energy"[2] supplied to him day by day which enabled him to grow more and more like the Savior. A Christian saint is a miracle of grace in as true a sense as is a prodigal who has returned to the Father. It is all the work of the Holy Spirit.

8. The Evangelicals' Eschatology

All Evangelicals held such a clear, positive view of Man, Sin, and Redemption, that one would expect them to have very pronounced teachings concerning things to come. Such was the case. Little wonder it is then that they made a full and uncompromising affirmation on these matters which were near and dear to their hearts. They insisted upon "the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Loud Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked." Their emphasis was not upon the immortality of the soul. One does not have to be an

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[1]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 185.

[2]William Jay, Female Scripture Characters, p. 29.

Evangelical to believe that. All Christians and many pagans firmly believe in a life after death. This doctrine was set forth as opposing the materialist conception of man and his future state. But the case was somewhat different with the belief in the bodily resurrection. Many believed that doctrine in a vague, half-hearted manner, while others denied it entirely. Hence, the Evangelicals took a firm stand on this doctrine, thereby greatly aiding their cause. But they also attached the greatest possible significance to the belief in a general judgment of the world by Christ with eternal rewards and blessedness for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

William Jay accepted these views on eschatology and gave much valuable teaching on this subject. Death to him was not merely the end of this life, but the beginning of another, far more glorious than anything heretofore known. It was not a hauling down of the flag, but a hoisting of the sails. "Death is the most serious and momentous event that can befall the children of men. For it is not the extinction of being, but only the termination of one mode of it, and the commencement of another; the transition from time, to eternity."[1] He accepted the bodily resurrection of Christ and looked upon it as a pattern of our resurrection, since there is a union existing between Christ and all believers.[2]

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[1] William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, II, pp. 136 f.

[2] William Jay, Morning Exercises (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1829), p. 250.

Heaven was almost as real to Mr. Jay as were his beautiful home and garden at Percy Place. It is a place; but he did not tell us where it is. He thought that it might possibly be this world, purified and made over. But he insisted that it was a place. Yet he was even more insistent upon its being a state -- a state too marvelous for human conception.[1] Christ will be there in person, and where He is, that is heaven.

Mr. Jay had no doubt that persons would know each other in this state of perfect happiness.[2] They would not be disembodied spirits floating about, but persons as easily and as surely recognizable as they are here upon earth. Sir William Knighton, who frequently heard Mr. Jay with much delight, bears this testimony to his idea of heaven.

> He said that he had no doubt, deducing his authority from Scripture, that saints and Christians would know each other in a future state; that the child taken from the disconsolate parent in early life, would welcome the pious and holy Christian parent to heaven. This earthly separation, therefore, being only for a season, bears marks of Divine love, and not the dispensation which, in our sorrow, we feel as an overwhelming calamity.[3]

There are other questions with which he deals. Will there be degrees in heaven? Mr. Jay answered that in the affirmative, stating that he felt such to be in keeping with the idea of rewards for Christian service. As to the various aspects of this exalted state, he maintained that knowledge would be perfect,

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[1] William Jay, The Christian Contemplated, p. 423.

[2] William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, II, pp. 23 f.

[3] Lady Knighton, op. cit., II, p. 310.

companionship indescribably delightful, and work abundant.[1] Heaven would be to him a very dull and uninteresting place if there were no activity. "I should as soon think that heaven was a nursery of vice, as a state of inaction."[2] But he is conspicuous for his silence as to the nature of this work. He would agree with those who affirm that 'eternal' refers to the quality rather than the quantity of the endless life.[3]

> Our life on earth is an alternation of activity and relaxation, of working and resting, of term and vacation, of business and holiday; and if we are to conceive of a transcendent quality of life at all, it must be one in which this alternation is genuinely transcended instead of one pole of it being merely glorified at the expense of the other. Hence it is false to think of heaven as a mere period of relaxation, a vast holiday, or the endless Long Vacation of the lazy student's dreams.[4]

But while Mr. Jay goes into detail in his discussion of heaven and the blessed state of the believer, he also expresses himself in an unmistakable manner concerning those who reject the mercy of God -- those who refuse to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He maintains that they will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. This exclusion will be final.[5] There comes a time when it is too late for the sinner to obtain mercy. He does not discuss the nature of this eternal punishment. Wheth-

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[1]William Jay, The Christian Contemplated, pp. 423 ff.

[2]Ibid., p. 427.

[3]John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 198 ff.

[4]Ibid., p. 232.

[5]William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, II, p. 10.

er it consists of something more than being separated from Christ and the Redeemed, he does not say. He does believe in a general judgment when Christ shall return, not as the lowly Galilean, but as the mighty Judge of the world. When that is to take place, Mr. Jay does not so much as express an opinion.

William Jay believed in the existence of a powerful influence for evil which was far more personal than a mere force. "I have always at hand an active adversary, the Devil."[1] He may not have thrown an ink bottle at him or spoken of him in such a fashion as did Martin Luther; but he believed in his existence and diabolical work. Mr. Jay set forth life and death, eternal blessedness and eternal damnation, heaven and hell, and plead with his hearers to choose the former.

9. The Ministry and the Sacraments

The final article upon which the Evangelicals took their stand had to do with the Ministry and the Sacraments. They insisted upon "the divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper." This might be considered a Magna Charta for all Nonconformist ministers. The Roman Catholic and Established Churches not only looked upon the offices of priest or bishop as a divine institution but also maintained that their clergy were descended directly from the early apostles. This

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[1]William Jay, Morning Exercises, I, p. 367.

gave to their ministers or priests the highest status possible in the eyes of the world. Their clergy had a sense of continuity. They had a great past which reached far back to that early date.

One can readily sense the terrible disadvantage under which every Nonconformist minister labored. All of them were looked upon as rabble-rousers, having neither a noble heritage nor a glorious future. They were considered as mean and base men lacking in dignity and destiny. We sense something of the manner in which Dissenters were regarded by a statement given to us by William Jay himself.

> Some, whatever may be his gifts or grace, would not for the world hear a man that is not episcopally sanctioned -- yet will hear anything upon earth that is. Yes, we have been told, that in this country, all who worship out of the established church [sic] are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God; that all their ministers are destitute of a legitimate authorization; and therefore that all their ministrations are invalid.[1]

But this was not altogether true. Evangelicals did not look upon them in this fashion. Many of them within the Establishment did not fail to recognize them as true servants of Christ and the rightful heirs of the blessings of God. It was not at all uncommon for Evangelicals of the Church of England, loyal and sincere Christians, not only to worship with the Dissenters, but even to aid their cause by building chapels. A great forward step was taken when Evangelicals, within and without the Church, agreed that the Christian Ministry is a divine institution, and ministers of all demoninations are true servants of Christ. This

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[1]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 179.

declaration, therefore, gave the dissenting ministers a new sense of their dignity and assured them of their standing and rights as ministers of Jesus Christ.

Protestants repudiate the Catholic teaching which is based upon the idea that justification is effected by means of the grace which is imparted through the sacraments, and maintain that it is by faith alone.[1] All Evangelicals hold to the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Though they differ greatly as to the nature and meaning of them, all Evangelicals agree that no true Christian will neglect these divine ordinances. Members of the Establishment believe in Baptismal Regeneration, whereas Nonconformists believe that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation. The Roman Catholics and High Churchmen believe in Transubstantiation, whereas to the Nonconformists the elements are symbolic only. The Romanists and the Anglo-Catholics hold that it is absolutely necessary for the Christian to partake of the sacraments, whereas others affirm that all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity will partake of them. All Nonconformists had a high and spiritual conception of these two sacraments but one which was quite different from that of the Romanist or the Anglo-Catholic. William Jay looked upon them in the same manner as did the other Dissenters. He held the Lord's Supper to be a means of grace. In the words that follow, Mr. Jay points out two common errors with respect to the Lord's Supper, and then states his own views.

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[1]Binns, op. cit., p. 121.

> "We may remark two of these. The first takes it in a sense too gross. It is the doctrine of transubstantiation, which has rolled down from age to age in blood. . . . The second takes it in a manner too refined, and is derived from the enemies of evangelical truth, who have always shown a peculiar aversion to the death of Christ under any other notion than that of an example or witness. . . . We live spiritually by the dying of the Lord Jesus; and the allusion refers to his mediatorial offering for our sins, and teaches us that faith is necessary to our deriving benefit from his sacrifice. . . . For this eating and drinking represent our believing on Christ."[1]

Mr. Jay held Baptism to be a symbol of the washing away of our sins, and of our union with Christ as members of His body. He practiced infant baptism and had special Sunday afternoon services at which times he administered this holy rite. However, Mr. Jay does not discuss this sacrament in any detail.

William Jay was not a great theologian but he had a great theology. He was by no means a pioneer in the field of Christian thought. On the contrary, he chose to follow a course which had been laid out by those who had gone before. Sometimes, however, Mr. Jay's path so fades that it is very difficult to follow him. The trail becomes all but imperceptible. At other times the theological traveler takes a path which branches off from his true course; but he eventually gets back on his trail and continues his journey.

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[1]William Jay, as quoted by Cyrus Jay in Recollections of William Jay, pp. 229 f.

William Jay did not like to be classified according to any theological system made by man. He rebelled at the idea. To be forced into such a mould was to him like being placed in a strait-jacket. He felt that man must get back of his systems -- behind the human to God Himself and hear what He has to say on the matter. "Let us not take up with the statements of Calvin, or Arminius, or any other reporter, while we can go to the Scripture itself."[1] That was his final authority, his highest court of appeal. Again and again he resorted thither that he might hear what God had to say. "I will therefore make no system of divinity, drawn up by fallible creatures like myself, my oracle; but enter at once the temple of Revelation, and enquire there."[2]

Even though William Jay did not wish to be classified by any human system, he was more nearly a Calvinist than anything else. In fact, he was a mild Calvinist. "Jay in his doctrinal views was a moderate Calvinist, and so he did not always satisfy the hyper-Calvinists who heard him."[3] His theology does not stand out boldly, but is woven into all his writings.

When Mr. Jay was in London having breakfast with John Newton, along with a number of other distinguished ministers, someone asked Mr. Newton if he were a Calvinist. Thereupon, he took a lump of sugar, dropped it into his coffee, and stirred it thoroughly. He then told his guest that he did not preach a

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[1]William Jay, Morning Exercises, II, pp. 104 f.

[2]Ibid., p. 282.

[3]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath, p, 32.

bold, straight, and undiluted form of Calvinism, but a mild and diffused form which permeated his religious thought as that sugar did his coffee.[1] The same may be said about William Jay. He felt that Calvinism was "a thing to be held, not formally preached,"[2] and that it should be as a bit of leaven in the lump. His Calvinism had many of the rough edges knocked off and sharp features worn down. While he never actually avoided doctrine, he was eminently practical. If he failed to express himself on some theological detail, as was so often the case, we must ever bear in mind that he rode to fame and glory as the Preacher and not as the Theologian. Much of his religious thought is implied rather than expressed.

The entire superstructure of William Jay's theology, like that of John Calvin, rests upon and springs from his doctrine of God.[3] He took his stand upon the Sovereignty of God and brought his life and thinking into line with that great and reassuring thought. The idea that there was One whose divine will would prevail, whose purpose would never fail, was a constant source of strength and comfort to William Jay throughout his long and useful career as a servant of Jesus Christ. Implicit faith in a sovereign God was the most inspiring and stabilizing fact of his life. This was the focal point of his religious thought---everything centered about this one fact. His life swung around

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[1] William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 276.

[2] Ibid., p. 227.

[3] A. Mitchell Hunter, The Teaching of Calvin (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson, and Co., 1920), p. 45.

this cardinal tenet of his faith as a gate on its hinges. His doctrine of the Atonement, his conception of the Church and Sacraments, and many other views originated with and were drawn from his doctrine of a Sovereign Being -- One who is an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving Father, ever present to help.

He accepts the doctrine of Predestination with a slight reservation. He willingly agrees to the belief that God can save whom He pleases or wills to save. He readily accepts Election in the positive sense, but he does not do so with Reprobation.[1] In referring to this matter in Calvinism as a system, he says, "If it be said that the inclusive and exclusive parts are inseparable, and that we cannot hold the one without the other -- I hesitate."[2] He was very careful to avoid such views of the doctrines of divine grace as would exclude <u>any</u> from the hope of salvation.

Immediately after his conversion at the age of sixteen, William Jay was leading in public prayer for the first time in his life and experiencing no little difficulty. He prayed that their names might be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. ". . . but a high-toned brother, from a neighbouring congregation, <u>who saw things clearly</u>, took him aside, and rebuked him for the impropriety of his expression, saying, 'You know that book was filled up from all eternity; and if our names <u>are</u> not written

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[1]William Jay, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 83 f.

[2]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 166 f.

there, they can never be now.'"[1] Mr. Jay believed that two great truths pervade the Bible -- "that if we are saved, it is entirely of God's grace; and if we are lost, it will be entirely from ourselves."[2] It is not surprising, then, that this great preacher's evangelical passion showed itself constantly in his "whosoever will"[3] attitude toward the sinner. Mr. Jay was extremely interested in foreign missions, and preached with strong conviction on this subject. He regarded the heathen as in darkness and perishing without God. In this respect he went far beyond Calvin who ". . . left them to the tender mercy of God and His extraordinary means of salvation. Certainly he displayed no trace of missionary enthusiasm."[4]

William Jay held that those who die in infancy and those who are not mentally balanced, and hence not accountable, will be saved. We sense his idea of a God of all compassion in the words that follow.

> Now this consolation extends to all children who die in a state of infancy. I know there are some who believe in the damnation of infants. They have no higher notion of a God of love, the Father of mercies, the God of all grace, than to suppose that he will punish eternally creatures whom the Scripture itself calls innocent as to personal and actual transgression, and whose condition depended entirely upon himself. Admitting this barbarous notion; could such a Being ever be trusted in, or loved?[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 167.

[3] Revelation 22:17.

[4] Hunter, The Teaching of Calvin, pp. 153 f.

[5] William Jay, Short Discourses For the Use of Families, II, p. 22.

Mr. Jay also believed in the final perseverance of the saints, and he felt assured that once a person had been saved there would be no falling away.[1] The Holy Spirit, by whom the sinner was quickened, would see him through to the end. If man were left to himself, he could not hold out for one day, or even for one hour. But he does not have to carry on alone.[2]

William Jay clung tenaciously to the doctrine of the Providence of God. Providence and Predestination are very closely related and yet they are quite different.

> Predestination defines the relation of God to the world; Providence is the working out in detail of that relation. Predestination fixes the gaze upon the eternal destinies; Providence deals with the links, minute as well as vast, in the chain of events which join up the pre-temporal decree with the execution of the final judgment. From eternity, to God's mind, there is no smallest link in that chain amissing. All happens as He appoints, so that His ultimate purposes cannot fail of accomplishment. The activity of His Providence ensures the fulfilment of His Predestination.[3]

Mr. Jay went far beyond the belief of the usual person as touching this doctrine. He believed with the simplicity of a child in a particular Providence. God was not some remote force in the dim and distant spaces, but a loving Father watching over His child. William Jay gave this cardinal belief as much prominence as did that great contemporary of his who said, "What the Scripture especially illustrates from its first page to its last, is God's Providence; and that is nearly the only doctrine

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[1] William Jay, Morning and Evening Exercises, II, p. 360.

[2] Ibid., IV, p. 343.

[3] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 130 f.

held with real assent by the mass of religious Englishmen."[1] We can never lay too much stress upon the personal and particular character of the Providence of God if we are to mirror truly the religious thought of William Jay. "Natural Theology, at best, will give us indications only of an 'architect of the universe', not of a just judge of men, still less of an unseen friend and father."[2] There was absolutely no doubt in his mind that God had at His command not only the cosmic forces of the universe but also the tiny and the apparently trivial events that touch and influence our lives. He was aware of the hand of God upon his own head. As he reached the top of the hill and looked back over his shoulder, he could trace the Providence of God at every turn in the road. It was God who had given him that first call to forsake the world and come to Christ. It was God who issued that second one -- the call into the glorious Ministry. It was due to a kind Providence that his lot had been cast in Bath, that beautiful and favorite city of the British Isles. It was Providence which opened the door for his broader field of service in London. Every event of his life, in retrospect, bears testimony to this providential care.

But this was true not only in a narrow, personal, and particular sense. It was just as true in the broadest and most far-reaching respect. William Jay had a simple but wonderful philosophy of history.

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[1]John Henry Newman, Grammar of Assent (London: Burns, Oates, and C., 1870), p. 55.

[2]A. E. Taylor, op. cit., p. 29.

> An insect in his hand would be omnipotent. There have been four great monarchies in the world, and each of them for the time seemed too firmly established to be rooted up. But in vain the Babylonian said, I will keep my throne; the Persian, I will keep my state; the Macedonian, I will retain my glory; and the Roman, I will retain my dominion. He took them all away, and trampled them under foot as the mire in the street.[1]

This comforting and reassuring doctrine runs through all of Mr. Jay's writings. Sometimes it may be heard like a mighty peal of thunder, steeling the nerves of men and women for the battle. At other times it is only a faint echo coming from the distance and consoling them in their deepest sorrow. But let us listen to the man himself.

> How delightful is it to sit at the feet of the great Teacher, and hear him discourse on the doctrine of Providence! Here we have nothing of the language of infidel philosophy. He does not represent the Supreme Being as occupied with worlds and whole systems; but overlooking individuals, and minute concerns -- He does not suppose the Supreme Being capable of perplexity and fatigue -- He did not think anything too hard for Infinite Wisdom and Power -- He did not think it beneath God to govern what it was not beneath him to create. Among men, an attention to little things prevents an attention to great things; and an attention to great things prevents an attention to little ones; and no one can equally regard all the claims of the province of government he fills, however limited it may be.[2]

A Passing Glimpse of the Oxford Movement

It would be very short-sighted to attempt to deal with Evangelicalism and to show how a measure of its glory was transmitted through William Jay without at least a reference to the

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[1]William Jay, Sermons Preached on Various and Particular Occasions, p. 233.

[2]William Jay, The Christian Contemplated, pp. 251 f.

Oxford Movement. In a word, the Oxford or Tractarian Movement was a strong reaction to and protest against Evangelicalism. It arose within the Established Church and claimed Oxford as its birthplace. The movement was an attempt on the part of its leaders to return to the primitive faith and so to bring about a revival of true religion within the Church of England -- an effort to have the Church reassert itself. In order to comprehend fully the main criticisms which its members hurled at the Evangelicals, both within and without the Established Church, we must get a clear-cut conception of the Church as held by the leaders of the Oxford Movement.

> What was the Church of England -- the question was implicit from the beginning and soon became explicit -- what was the Church of England that she not only dared but must must assert her rights against the State? The answer was simple. She was the Catholic and Apostolic Church, ordained by Christ Himself, tracing back her authority to the Apostles through the laying on of hands, and keeping in her sole gift the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, by which God's saving grace was conveyed to sinful man. She bore on her shoulders the weight of accumulated error; she was shackled by her subordination to the civil power; the purity of her doctrine had been sullied by the self-confident imaginations of the Reformers. Nevertheless she was still the Catholic and Apostolic Church, no vain creation of human fancy, but the daughter of God, the bride of Christ, the mother of souls.[1]

With this conception of the Church before us, let us now turn and examine carefully the two main criticisms of Evangelicalism, the first of which came from members of the Oxford Movement.

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[1]Geoffrey Faber, Oxford Apostles, A Character Study of the Oxford Movement (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 335.

The Two Main Criticisms of Evangelicalism

The strongest criticism hurled at the Evangelicals by the leaders of the Oxford Movement was that they were completely lacking in a true conception of the Church. This criticism, seen in the light of history, is in some measure justifiable. For the leaders of the Oxford Movement did lay great stress upon the Church, a fact which seems to have been either ignored or not emphasized by most Evangelicals. These leaders of the Oxford Movement held a very high doctrine of the Church. "They held the prestige, the independence, the supremacy of the Church to be more important than anything else in the world. . . They were hostile to Roman pretensions, and severe towards Roman abuses; but they claimed the same title of Catholic, the same ecclesiastical inheritance; and they loathed the title of Protestant only less than that of Dissenter."[1] At the same time they affirmed that the Evangelicals had a very low and improper view of the Church. The Churchman looked back with great pride upon a Church which he held to be the only true one, and one which, for the most part, was united and free from divisions. His Church, he maintained, had a glorious heritage, a sense of history, a long and unbroken line of distinguished clergymen going back to the Apostles and even to Christ Himself.

The Churchman is worthy of praise in that his Church does enjoy a measure of unity, has a sense of history, and has

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[1] Ibid., pp. 72 f.

borne a continuous witness to the power of Christ through the centuries. However, most Evangelicals and all Dissenters would reject the doctrine of the Church as set forth by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. For Dissenters, though they presented a broken front and experienced many divisions, nevertheless claimed to be members of the Church of Christ in as true a sense as the Churchmen. Their Church is made up of men and women who have been called out of the world into a Christian fellowship -- persons who profess Jesus Christ as their King and Lord and who are sincerely seeking to live according to His will.

There are many matters, as we have seen[1], upon which Mr. Jay has made no clear-cut and detailed pronouncement. The Church is one of them. However, we can gather his idea of it by his reference to his particular church at Bath. Whenever he referred to it in any official capacity, he always did so by calling it the church and congregation assembled in Argyle Chapel. There was always that nucleus which made up a gathered church. These members had been called out of the world into the fellowship of Christ, each having had a definite religious experience, and constituted the membership of the church. They, along with the pastor, made up the Church Meeting and had the privilege of voting on all matters of Faith and Order. All others who worshipped at Argyle Chapel made up the congregation. However, Mr. Jay did not make as much of the Church Meeting as later Congregationalists have done, but usually looked to his Deacons to

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[1]Supra., p. 222.

rule on the ordinary matters arising in the life of the church. Even though he was a loyal minister of the Congregational Church, he cannot be said to have been a Congregationalist by conviction in the strictest sense. His loyalty went beyond mere denominational lines to the Church of Christ throughout the world. He often said that he could worship with anyone who held Jesus Christ as King and Head of the Church.[1] His conception of the Church of Christ was that of a great body of believers scattered throughout the world and owning their allegiance to Christ and to Him alone. "It is that holy society of believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit; so that,though made up of many communions, organized in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in Him."[2] In none of his writings does Mr. Jay attempt a difinition of the Christian Church, and yet he would agree heartily with the above definition. His doctrine of the Church, though by no means as high and clearly defined as that of members of the Oxford Movement, was just as real and perhaps even more spiritual.

The second main criticism of the Evangelicals is one which has come from modern economic historians. They readily agree that the Evangelicals did a great work and brought about many sweeping reforms in remote places, but accuse them of being

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[1] Supra., p. 186, note 2.

[2] Definition of the Holy Catholic Church in the Catechism issued by the Free Church Council and quoted by Binns in The Evangelical Movement in the English Church, p. 113.

disinterested in the social conditions of those about them. They are willing to concede the fact that most Evangelicals preached the Gospel with fervency but claimed that they did not cry out against the terrible conditions under which the men and women were living. In a word, they merely preached the Gospel in its purity and power and stopped there. They failed to realize its social implications. They were lacking in social consciousness.

We have pointed out in this thesis that Mr. Jay felt that he could make his greatest contribution to the cause of Christ and the social order by chanelling his efforts through the pulpit.[1] We have heard him cry out in no uncertain terms on behalf of those who were deprived of even the bare necessities of life.[2] We have noticed that he was untiring in his efforts to raise money for asylums, hospitals, and charity.[3] Attention has been called to the fact that in his own local church he organized a Day School for the children and a Sick Man's Friend Society to care for the needs of the infirm.[4] Furthermore, he was intensely interested in Foreign Missions.[5] Though he made no pronouncement whatever on the Reform Bill, we feel that he did overcome the individualistic ethic of Evangelicalism.

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[1] Supra., p. 89.

[2] Supra., pp. 129 f.

[3] Supra., pp. 89, 92.

[4] Supra., p. 81.

[5] Supra., p. 224.

When we examine Mr. Jay's achievements in the light of the criticism of the modern economic historians, we see that he and others like him might have done even more than they did. However, almost every worthy cause of that period, whether missionary, philanthropic, educational, or otherwise, originated with and was carried out by staunch Evangelicals.

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*Note:- The text of this thesis has been amended in accordance with Additional Regulations No. 11 of Regulations 1949 - 1950.

CHAPTER VI

AN EVALUATION OF WILLIAM JAY
and
HIS CONTRIBUTION TO EVANGELICALISM

CHAPTER VI

AN EVALUATION OF WILLIAM JAY and HIS CONTRIBUTION TO EVANGELICALISM

We have seen many aspects of the life and achievements of this great man. We have observed him when, at the tender age of sixteen, he was attracting thousands by his preaching, and have seen his remarkable gifts undiminished long after the venerable minister had passed his three score years and ten. The various periods of his life have been considered, and also the many ways in which he served God and his fellow men. Numerous good points have been held up for our commendation. At other times we have been able to discover glaring weaknesses. Let us now make as unbiased and impartial an evaluation as possible of the man and his contribution to the evangelical cause.

Numbered Among the Great

On October 11, 1899, almost half a century after the death of William Jay, the Mayor and Corporation of the City of Bath unveiled a mural tablet which they had placed to his memory on one of the front columns of Argyle Chapel. This bronze record bears mute testimony to the fact that "William Jay was minister here 1790 - 1853."[1] Nothing else is inscribed on the

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[1]Tuck, op. cit., facing p. 1.

tablet. No word of explanation is given as to who William Jay was. None was necessary. It would be like describing a well known and beloved national figure of the day. The name, William Jay, was all that was needed, for it carried its own significant meaning. In connection with this unveiling ceremony there was a religious service at which a memorable address was made by none other than Dr. Joseph Parker of City Temple, London.[1]

But the most wonderful tribute ever paid to William Jay, either in life or death, is one which came almost one hundred years after he had reached his greatest heights as a preacher. It was not given by the clergy or the church, but came from the citizens of Bath. In 1925 a committee published The Book of Bath[2] in celebration of the ninety-third annual meeting of the British Medical Association which was held at Bath in July of that year. All phases of life in that historic, romantic, and picturesque city are thoroughly treated. Many great and mighty men are mentioned and praised throughout the pages of this sizeable volume -- famous artists, writers, scientists, statesmen, great soldiers and sailors. Thirty-four of these men and women who lived at Bath at one time or another are pictured at the end of this book and their street addresses listed. Edmund Burke, Charles Dickens, Sir William Herschel, Samuel Johnson, Lord Nelson and others are remembered. The fourth name in this list is that of William Jay. There is not another clergyman from the

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[1] Ibid., p. 37.

[2] A Compilation, The Book of Bath (London: Ballantyne and Co., Ltd., 1925), p. 245.

ranks of either the Establishment or Nonconformity whose name is listed. This is very significant when one recalls the fact that Bath had its ancient Abbey and had long been a stronghold of the Established Church. It is even more striking when we consider that this was the city in all of England where a Nonconformist minister was least likely to succeed. Mr. Jay accomplished all but the impossible. This only emphasizes the real worth and true greatness of the man. It is indeed fitting that the large portrait of this outstanding preacher hangs in the Guild Hall of Bath near that of His Majesty George V.

"Weighed in the Balances"[1]

Far be it from me to hold up William Jay as a perfect example of everything that a Christian minister should be. For he was not; and were he with us today, he would be the first to admit it. Critics are true when they affirm that his writings lack elegance, beauty, and refinement and that they are not as profound and brilliant as those of some of his contemporaries. Mr. Jay, as we have already seen, freely admitted that he had had no classical training and regretted the fact very much. He did not pride himself on his scant formal schooling, as if to make light of education. He was a firm believer in its worth, and did all that he possibly could to overcome this terrible handicap. However, as we have said time and time again, Mr.

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[1]Daniel 5:27.

Jay's one desire was to be greatly used of God; and few have better served their generation than did he.

William Jay was lacking in the grace of sharing responsibility with younger ministers, else the unfortunate developments of the Vaughn incident would not have occurred. Neither did he know how to resign gracefully. If only he had withdrawn himself entirely from the life of Argyle Chapel after his resignation, without the unhappy scene which took place just as the final curtain was about to fall on the drama of his life, what a difference it would have made! For Mr. Jay was in some measure responsible for all of the unpleasantness which led to the secession from his church and the organization of Percy Church. He should not have participated in any manner in the selection of his successor.

It also seems very unfortunate that he should have married a second time so late in life -- and that, in less than one year after the death of his first wife. He was so greatly and generally admired that people everywhere could not help being deeply disappointed; and we feel that in this decision he rendered a distinct disservice to the cause of Christ. At the commencement of this study I made these two unpleasant discoveries about William Jay -- the fact of his second marriage, and of his share of the responsibility for the secession from Argyle Chapel. And now at the end of it, I still hold the same opinion.

Nor can we overlook Mr. Jay's failure to visit his people and share more fully with them in the joys and sorrows of

their everyday life. His resolve to be the best preacher possible is very commendable. But we feel that he could have been a far better pastor, and still have been the strong preacher that he was. He was great in spite of this shortcoming, and not because of it.

However, these matters are trivial when seen in the light of his great accomplishments, and he

> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued . . .[1]

His Evangelical Contribution

William Jay firmly believed with Joseph Milner that the true Church of Christ in all ages has been evangelical, that her great leaders have been evangelically minded, and that when the Church fails to carry out her mission, it is usually because of a lapse from evangelicalism.[2] We readily see that Mr. Jay attached the greatest possible significance to this cause. Realizing its tremendous importance, he made a large contribution by both his preaching and his writing. He viewed life itself and the world through evangelical eyes.

> 'What a world is here! It excites me, and yet it depresses me. Every man has an object, but still very few

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[1]William Shakespeare, Macbeth, I, vii, 17, Works of William Shakespeare, eds. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright (Globe ed.; London: MacMillan and Co., 1880), p. 792.

[2]Joseph Milner, History of the Church of Christ, cited by Rufus M. Jones in Later Periods of Quakerism, I, p. 272.

> have a right one. It is money, or pleasure: O how few among them seek after God! How few are preparing in earnest for eternity.'[1]

William Jay enjoyed a long and fruitful ministry. He has the unusual distinction of having preached with great acceptance from the same pulpit longer than many ministers even live today. Early in life he came to know and serve his Savior, and never had to utter those remorseful words of Samuel Rutherford, who allowed himself to reach manhood before yielding his heart to Christ: "Like a fool as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon."[2] As we have noted, William Jay was not inclined to controversy, nor equipped for it. Hence, while many of his brethren were spending their time and talents in this less fruitful manner, he was giving all his energies to preaching the Gospel. We wish that we might know the exact number of persons who were won to Christ, directly or indirectly through his influence, but, of course, this is humanly impossible. However, there are some things about which we can be absolutely certain. In his early village preaching he addressed thousands, and met with such great success that his benefactors did not have the heart to send him to Oxford, thus depriving the wretched and miserable villagers of his services. We know also that during his one year at the Hotwells, there were among those whom he won to Christ three young men who later became preachers. His phenominal ministry at Argyle Chapel needs no comment.

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[1]Wallace, op. cit., p. 130.

[2]Alexander Smellie, Men of the Covenant (London: Blackfriars Publishing Co., Ltd., 1903), I, p. 77.

Add to this the fact that what his congregation received at Bath was in a large measure enjoyed by the English speaking world through his writings, and we shall get some idea of the great contribution which he made to Evangelicalism. We cannot speak too highly of his devotional literature, especially his Morning and Evening Exercises. These religious classics found their way into thousands of homes, and helped to meet one of the crying needs of his age. It is impossible for us today, with the radio and the wealth of religious literature at our disposal, to appreciate fully what Mr. Jay's devotional books meant to the people of his own and later times. Some of them are read and valued even now.

As for his sermons, they would be too long, if judged by modern standards, but not for his time. Though he has been censored for the bold manner in which the divisions of his outlines stand out, I am not inclined to agree with his critics. He was striving to make his message understood and remembered by his hearers, and I feel that this was one of his strong points. I also beg to disagree with those who affirm that he chose far too many quaint and unfamiliar texts. It is true that he occasionally employed a strange text, but for every odd one which he used, he preached from a hundred that were familiar and great. Furthermore, he usually brought to light in a very striking manner an all but unknown incident or passage. This was one of his great assets. No man can speak to the same people four times a week for well over a half century and expect to keep his audience, without using every type of text -- familiar and un-

familiar. His messages were ~~all~~ deeply spiritual, biblical throughout, and extremely helpful. There is a strong evangelical current running through them from start to finish. The fact that Argyle Chapel had to be enlarged three different times during his ministry, and that hundreds were regularly turned away from Surrey Chapel when he preached in London, is proof enough that his sermons were meeting a great need. When one has carefully examined them, he is not surprised that Mr. Jay was asked to preach five times over a period of fifty-five years before the London Missionary Society. This eminent minister knew God, and he knew man. Few have been able to bring man face to face with God as did he.

Mr. Jay was always a great balance wheel for the evangelical cause. He never allowed his zeal to get out of control, or to be lacking in knowledge. On the other hand, he was careful to maintain that warmth and fervor so necessary to effectiveness. It was by no means as manifest in him as it was in George Whitefield; however, his evangelical spirit was constant throughout his long life. Like those hot springs of Bath, which, from time undated to the present, have flowed undiminished and unabated, bringing healing to the bodies of countless thousands, so his ministry has brought healing to the souls of multitudes.

We are in full agreement with those who believed that Mr. Jay was raised up of God and placed in Bath for a special purpose. For his contribution to Evangelicalism was greatly multiplied by the fact that he lived in that particular city where people gathered from all parts of the world. There he influ-

enced many lives which he would never have touched, had he lived in some isolated village. Dissenter though he was, Mr. Jay was interested and active in every great cause of his day, and thus helped to raise the standard of public morals not only in his own city, but throughout Great Britain as well.

Independency owes a debt of gratitude to William Jay which can never be paid. He went to Bath, took a little handful of thirty scattered and struggling Christians and, by the help of God, made them into one of the great churches of the Congregational Union. Nonconformity owes a debt to William Jay which can never be paid. At a time when it was very unpopular to be a Dissenter, he stood out bravely and in a most effective manner championed the cause of Christ. The Christian Church owes a debt to William Jay which can never be fully paid, and looks back upon him with great pride, numbering him among her true sons.

The Prophet's Mantle

As we survey the situation of the Church of Christ today -- not only in England but throughout the world -- as we consider her tremendous need, we are reminded of an enviable tribute which the poet has paid to another great Nonconformist of earlier times.

> Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
> England hath need of thee . . . [1]

How amazing that a man of the caliber of William Jay

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[1]William Wordsworth, "London, 1802", The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth (London: MacMillan and Co., 1893), p. 181.

should be so soon forgotten! It is unbelievable that a preacher who exerted such a tremendous influence on the Christian world should have passed so quickly off the scene and out of the minds of men. But such is life! As we think of this remarkable man, it is our sincere hope that many others may be inspired by the godly example which he has left behind, and may rise to catch the mantle of this great prophet.

> 'Our closing petition to the God of infinite wisdom, to the Father of infinite mercy, is ----- that another William Jay may be raised up, to preach as he did, to write as he did, and to be the instrument of conveying moral and spiritual benefit to thousands and tens of thousands, as the providence and grace of Heaven enabled him to become.'[1]

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[1]Wallace, op. cit., pp. 224 f.

THE APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

The Date of William Jay's Birth

Writers are at variance as to the exact date of William Jay's birth. They are almost equally divided on this matter. Some list his birthday as May 6, 1769, and others maintain that he was born two days later, on May 8th.

We have already pointed out that Mr. Jay was very careless about recording dates. His Autobiography bears testimony to this fact. It lists May 6, 1769, as the day on which William Jay was born.[1] However, this date has been inserted in a note by the editors and was not furnished by the author himself. The Autobiography was not published until after Mr. Jay's death. Cyrus Jay gives the same day,[2] but most of the information in his book seems to have been gleaned from the Autobiography. His volume also was written after the death of Mr. Jay. James Silvester has given the same date;[3] but his work, too, appeared after the death of the famed preacher.

Very likely we shall never know with absolute certainty whether William Jay was born on May 6 or May 8, 1769. The family Bible, if one exists, cannot be located. No tombstone is over his grave. The parish registers for that period carry the

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[1]William Jay, The Autobiography, p. 17.

[2]Cyrus Jay, Recollections of William Jay, p. 1.

[3]James Silvester, Two Famous Preachers of Bath, p. 1.

date of the person's baptism rather than his birth. But the evidence which we have overwhelmingly favors the later of these two days.

All available accounts of the life of William Jay which were published during his lifetime favor May 8th.[1] Furthermore, when Mr. Jay's Works first appeared in the United States of America in 1832, they were published "from a copy furnished by the Author to the Publishers."[2] A full description of Mr. Jay's works, along with an account of the author's life, was published at the time.[3] Coming from a record supplied by the author himself, this evidence should be far more significant.

The Rev. William H. Dyer knew the aged minister well, and succeeded him as pastor of Argyle Chapel. He preached one of a number of funeral sermons at the death of William Jay and wrote an account of his life and labors, which was published in the British Banner the day following Mr. Jay's funeral.[4] He gives May 8th as the date of his birth. The Dictionary of National Biography lists the same day. Dr. James F. Blackett, Secretary of Argyle Chapel, believes the later date to be the correct one.[5]

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[1]One of the earlier references to his life is to be found in the European Magazine of 1819, which gives May 8, 1769, as the date of his birth.

[2]Ascribed to Archibald Alexander, "Jay's Works," Biblical Repertory and Theological Review, Vol. V, 1833, p. 369.

[3]Ibid., p. 370. May 8, 1769, is listed as date of his birth.

[4]William H. Dyer, A Sketch of the Life and Labours of William Jay, p. 3.

[5]James F. Blackett, A letter to the author dated from Bath, December 19, 1949.

Such is also the opinion of Reginald W. M. Wright, Director of the Victoria Art Gallery and Municipal Library, Bath.[1]

But the most conclusive evidence is that which is found on a marble tablet in Argyle Chapel, erected to the memory of Mr. Jay very shortly after his death by his staunchest friends and supporters. This marker records May 8th as the date of his birth.[2] If this memorial was erected by Mr. Jay's most intimate friends, it is very likely correct; for they would have known his birthday and doubtless would have celebrated it with him many times. A facsimile of this tablet appears in both the Autobiography[3] and the Recollections of William Jay[4] without comment either by the editors or by Cyrus Jay himself. Hence I take it that this record is true.

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[1]Reginald W. M. Wright, A letter to the author dated from Bath, November 18, 1949.

[2]I have carefully examined the inscription on this marker

[3]William Jay, op. cit., p. 585.

[4]Cyrus Jay, op. cit., p. 381.

APPENDIX B

Letter to the Editor of the Bath Journal[1]

Sir, - In your last week's issue appeared a letter from a correspondent with reference to Mr. Jay having assisted in the erection of Fonthill Abbey.

If Mr. Jay's Autobiography had been at all carefully looked into it would have been seen that the only reference Mr. Jay himself makes to the fact of his working as a mason is on page 23, where he speaks of returning from his work at Fonthill House, which he calls at page 19 "the splendid mansion of Mr. Beckford." The mention of Fonthill Abbey only occurs in a long note by the editors, in which they have confused "House" and "Abbey," and mentioned the latter without any foundation.

Fonthill House was built by Alderman Beckford, who was twice Lord Mayor of London, the father of the William Beckford who died in 1770, the year after Mr. Jay was born. William Beckford the younger lived at Fonthill House until about the year 1801. In that year the furniture and most of the valuable contents of the mansion were sold, and in the following year the whole of the pictures. Immediately after this valuable collection was dispersed Mr. Beckford commenced another collection and after this erected the magnificent edifice Fonthill Abbey, where he resided until 1822, when he came to Bath. In 1825 the lofty

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[1]A copy of this letter may be seen in the Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

tower fell carrying with it the greater part of the western portion of the mansion and afterwards the whole was taken down and sold and the ruins entirely removed.

Mr. Jay went to Rev. Cornelius Winter at Marlborough in 1785 where he remained till 1788 in which year he first preached in Surrey Chapel, London, for Rev. Rowland Hill. Mr. Jay tells us that he usually had to preach three times on the Sabbath and twice or more in the week, and as he speedily became a very popular preacher, the statement that he preached 1000 sermons before he was 21 appears in the highest degree probable, as he would not attain his majority until the year 1790.

I have been for many months engaged in an endeavour to trace out with greater accuracy and completeness than has ever previously been attempted the history of the Independent interest in Bath, especially in its early stages and have been successful in making many interesting discoveries and hope before long to complete the task I have set myself, which I need not say has involved more labour than I at first contemplated, but it is a work in which I have been deeply interested, and I believe I shall be able to furnish conclusive evidence on many doubtful and disputed points in connection with that history.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM TUCK.

15, Milsom-street, Bath;
July 5th, 1881.

APPENDIX C

Lines written by the Rev. Mr. Jay, of Bath, on visiting his native Village in 1800.

The way by which a gracious God
Has led me all my days
Demands on each review a song
Of wonder and of praise.
His care attending every step
Was my perpetual guide;
His ear attentive heard my prayer,
His hand my want supplied.
The course through which my journey ran
Was winding and unknown;
His providence the scenes had plann'd,
And each appear'd his own.
More now, since first I left this spot,
Than twice eight years have fled;
And many once who charmed my youth
Are number'd with the dead.
T'was [sic] here I drew my infant breath,
Here fled my youthful hours;
Here first I heard the Gospel sound,
And felt its heavenly powers.
When o'er my former walks I rove,
How fresh the scenes appear!
And here I poured an artless prayer,
And there indulged a tear.
Unknown to fortune and to fame,
My early years expir'd;
No science had enriched my mind,
No hope my bosom fired.
But Heaven a Winter* thus address'd:
This youth I charge on thee:
Go, take him -- I the impulse gave --
And train him up for Me.
Awaken thou each dormant power,
Chase every cloud away,
And on his understanding pour
An intellectual day.
The tree that in a barren soil
Can no good produce bear,
Transposed, may flourish, and with fruit
Repay the dresser's care.
Winter! * I love to think on thee,
And those dear hours review
When in thy house and from thy lips
I sacred wisdom drew.

Thy life, enforcing all thy rules,
Shed every grace abroad,
And thine example all alive
Pourtray'd [sic] the man of God.
Nor would I now the blessings lose
Which from thy care have flow'd,
For all the schools of fame have given
Or colleges bestowed.
Here, O my soul, the time recal [sic]
When my commission came:
How blessed, when sixteen years had roll'd,
To preach a Saviour's name!
Poor Abington! among thy sons,
The shepherds of the plain,
My first attempt to preach was made,
Nor was it made in vain.
The cloudy pillar leading on,
No motions I pursued
'Till o'er the city famed for cures
The holy symbol stood.
"Here," cried the voice, "thy station fix,
"And here thy rovings end;
"Here teach the words of endless life,
"And here thy charge attend.
"Proclaim a Fountain nobler far
"Than this Bethesda knows:
"'Tis always open, always free,
"And with salvation flows.
"The sons of pleasure here who come
"Invite to endless bliss:
"He who another life receives
"Can only relish this.
"Here Satan's seat exalted stands,
"And vice in triumph reigns:
"A crown for him who owns Me here,
"And all my truth maintains."
O Lord, evince the choice thy own
Which placed me where I move;
And while thy people see thy power,
May <u>one</u> a <u>thousand</u> prove!
Here I return increas'd and bless'd
By all-indulgent Heaven;
My God the joys of wedded love,
And children too, has given.
Yonder appears, by Mary led,
My lovely train in view!
My cherubs, round your mother play:
The scene shall end with you.
To raise an Ebenezer <u>here</u>,
My God, is surely just,
His motto -- "Praise for all the past,
And for the future trust."

*In allusion to his being placed under the care of the late Rev. Mr. Winter.

APPENDIX D

Hymn to be sung at the opening of the New Place of Worship, at Colerne, on Wednesday, 15th September, 1824.

On this auspicious day
Oh! God of truth and love,
Within these walls display
Some token from above;
And let, the earnest of thy grace --
The cloud of glory, -- fill the place.

No costly pomp we need
Thy presence to insure;
Thine eye delights to view
The contrite and the poor:
Where'er they meet thine house is known,
And wide the gate of heav'n is thrown.

Here let the Spirit's sword
Ne'er wielded be in vain;
But in the conscience leave
The salutary pain:
And here, Thou Balm of Life! impart
Thy healings to the bleeding heart.

Here let the trembler lose
The fears with which he came;
And here the smoaking flax
Break forth a shining flame;
And every troubled, wearied mind,
A refuge in this palace find.

Support and hope divine
Here let the aged feel;
Here let the young arise,
And burn with holy zeal;
And children, with their Saviour nigh,
Hosannah! in the temple cry.

How bless'd, to live where law
No persecution knows;
But truth and zeal can flow,
And none their course oppose:
Let peace attend, while time endures,
A land whose throne, our rights secures.

Whatever name they bear,
All other Churches bless;
Though not with us, they walk,
We joy in their success;
And hope, begun on earth, to prove,
The reign of universal love.

In vain this house we build,
In vain we here convene,
Unless thy voice is heard,
Unless thy power is seen:
But while we thus record thy name,
Thy promis'd blessing, Lord, we claim.

W. J-y

T H E B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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(1) Letter from William Jay to Samuel Nichols at Wymondley Academy, near Hitchin, Herts. Bath, May 27, 1818.

(2) Letter from William Jay to Rev. J. N. Goulty at Henley-on-Thames. Bath, September 5, 1820.

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(1) Letter from William Jay to Miss Harris at Caen, France. Bath, December 28, 1842.

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(1) Letter from William Jay to Rev. T. Haynes at Bristol. Bath, January 29, 1836.

(2) Letter from William Jay to Rev. Dr. Raffles at Liverpool. Bath, February 10, 1840.

(3) Letter from William Jay to John Eddison at Clifton. Bristol, June 21, 1841.

Material at Bath Municipal Library

(1) Autograph letter No. 1287 from William Jay to Rev. Dr. Raffles at Tabernacle, Bristol. Bath, September 3, [no year, no address] "Hand by Revd. Mr King".

(2) Autograph letter from William Jay to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, offering his Morning Exercises for the Queen's acceptance. Bath, March 8, 1838. Presumably a draft of the letter sent. Hunt Collection, Part 2.

(3) Volume of Autograph Letters, newscuttings and illustrations relating to the Rev. William Jay and others, Argyle Chapel, Christian Malford, etc.

Contains:- Autograph Letters

May 14, 1836, to Mr. Newal, Bridge Street, Bath.

March 20, 1838, To Rev. Mr. Douglas, Reading.

February 13, 1840, to the Minister of Ducie Chapel, Manchester.

Worthing, April 13, 1850, to Mr. Charles Godwin, of Bath.

Bradford, October 28, 1850, to Mr. Charles Godwin, of Bath.

Cambridge, May 18, 1851, to Mr. Charles Godwin of Bath.

Fourteen other letters, most of them without date or address, to Mr. Charles Godwin, dealing with personal and church matters.

Portion of Evening Exercise for January 5th in Autograph.

Lines sent to a little girl on her birthday and by his permission, printed... November 30, 1826. Original Manuscript and Broadsheet copy in print.

Lines on the portrait of the Rev. William Jay of Bath, July 5, 1836, by J. Montgomery.

(4) Letter No. 234 from William Jay to Miss Brown at 5 Devonshire Buildings, Weymouth. Bath, July 18, 1840.

(5) Newscuttings relating to the unpleasantness existing between pastor and deacons at the resignation of William Jay from Argyle Chapel.

(6) Biographical extracts, handbills, etc., relating to the Rev. William Jay. Hunt Collection, Part 2.

(7) Pamphlet: Important Sale No. 4 Percy Place, a Catalogue of an extensive and valuable library of books, etc. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1858.

(8) Broadsheet copy of History of Percy Church. Bath: C. Clark, 1854.

Material in Archives of Argyle Chapel, Bath.

(1) Autograph letter from William Jay to Samuel Hallet. St. Ives, April 21, 1818.

(2) Autograph letter from William Jay to Henry Griffith. Bath, June 2, 1831.

(3) Autograph letter to William Jay from Argyle Congregation and three of the six deacons. Bath, March 24, 1853.

(4) Autograph letter to William Jay from William Wilberforce, delivered by Mr. Godwin, no date given.

(5) Copy of letter to William Jay from William Wilberforce. Elindon House, near Birmingham, December 30, 1839.

(6) Copy of letter from William Jay to Mary Rogers. Bath, January 17, 1846.

(7) Copy of letter from William Jay to Mr. and Mrs. Newal, no date given.

(8) Copy of letter from William Jay to the deacons of Argyle Chapel, requesting a burial place for his family. No date given.

(9) Copy of letter from Charles Clark to Rev. W. H. Dyer. No date given.

(10) Copy of proceedings of farewell meeting held for Rev. R. A. Vaughn.

(11) William Jay, Lines on The Death of Miss Statira Jay, August 31, 1820.

(12) William Jay, Lines Composed While Visiting His Native Village. This poem appeared in the Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, July 28, 1819.

(13) Manuscript copy of William Jay's Lines Composed on the Beach at Tenemouth, September 6, 1790.

(14) William Jay, Lines Upon Receiving from America the Picture of His Daughter, Mrs. Bolton, July 5, 1840.

(15) William Jay, Lines Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Monck. Printed by Houlstons, Wellington, August, 1811.

(16) Manuscript copy of William Jay's Lines to His Daughter, Mrs Bolton, on the Day of Her Marriage, May 11, 1811.

(17) Hymn for the opening of the Chapel at Colerne, September 15, 1824. Printed in Broadsheet by Clark of Bath, 1824.

(18) Published letter from William Jay to Secretary of Manchester Temperance Meeting, dated from Bath, April 7, 1848.

(19) Historical Records of Argyle Chapel, 1790 - 1855.

Correspondence

(1) A letter from Reginald W. M. Wright, Director Victoria Art Gallery and Municipal Library, Bath, to the author, giving his grandmother's account of how the country people travelled great distances to hear William Jay preach. 4 Forester Road, Bath, November 17, 1949.

(2) A letter from Reginald W. M. Wright to the author with reference to the exact date of William Jay's birth. Victoria Art Gallery and Municipal Library, Bath, November 18, 1949.

(3) A letter from Dr. James F. Blackett, Secretary of Argyle Chapel, to the author concerning the date of William Jay's birth. Hamsterley, Bloomfield Park, Bath, December 19, 1949.

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A tinted engraving of William Jay by J. Goldar from a painting by C. Averne, published in 1789 by J. Goldar. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay by R. Hanesck from a painting by Hutchisson. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay by H. Cook after an original drawing by N. C. Branwhite, an autograph copy of the same. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay, aged nineteen, by J. Goldar, from an original picture. Published in 1788 by J. Goldar. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay by T. Overton, from an original drawing by T. Langdon. Published in 1817 by T. Langdon. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay by W. Holl from a painting by R. Evans and sold by Fisher & Son, London and Paris, 1836. Hunt Collection.

An engraving of William Jay by F. Thomson from an original painting by W. Etty. Published for European Magazine by J. Asperne. London, 1819. Hunt Collection.

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An engraving of William Jay by W. O. Geller from a portrait by W. J. Bolton, published by C. A. Bartlett, London, 1842.

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